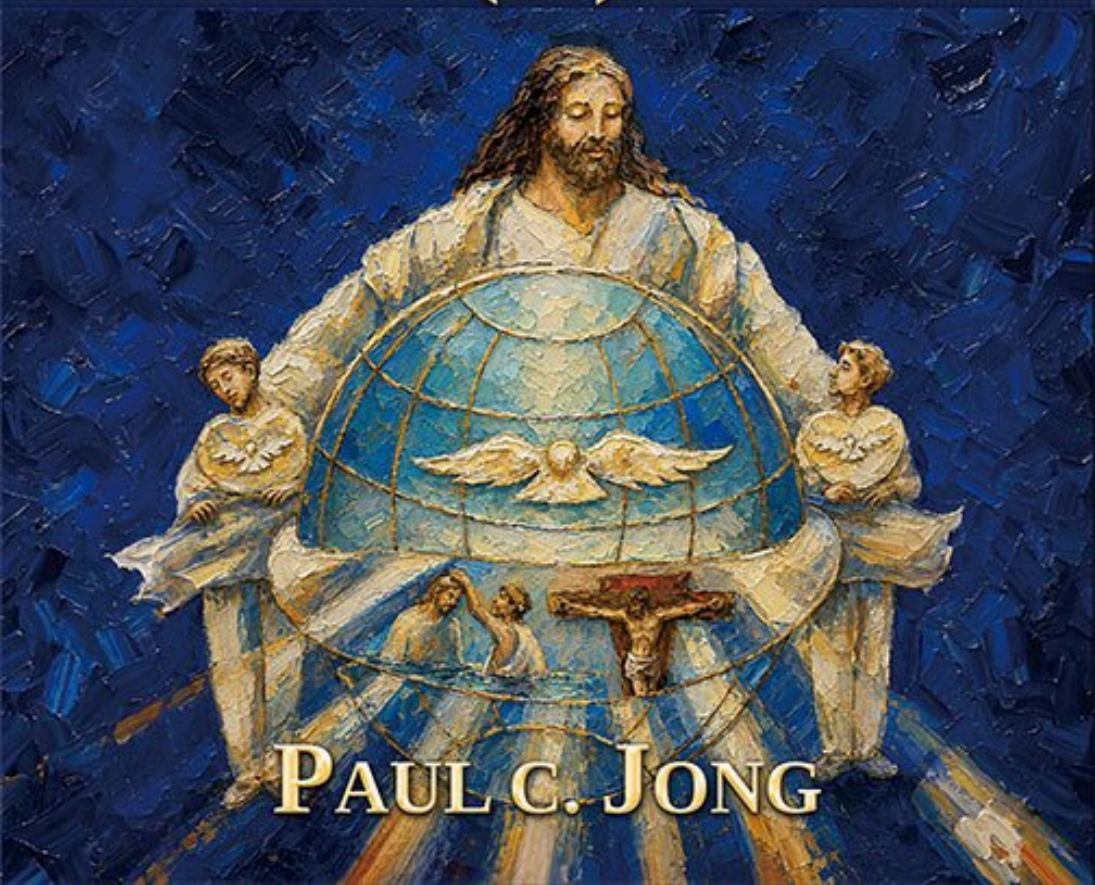
Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Mark

Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II)



PAUL C. JONG



Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II)

Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Hephzibah

“The things which come out of a man, those are the things that defile a man” (Mark 7:16)

Why do the sins of the heart not disappear even through outward rules and religious zeal? Because evil thoughts, greed, pride, and deceit lie in the very heart of man and come out of it constantly. Though you wash your hands and feet and keep repeated rituals, the sins of your heart are not washed away. True repentance is to turn from your own righteousness and from mistaken faith, and to believe, exactly as the Word says, the salvation that God has already accomplished with the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

By the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of the world that come out of our hearts and deeds, and by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross as the wages of those sins, He removed all the sins of this world once and for all. And rising from the dead, He gave eternal new life to those who believe.

Do not try to wash your sins away one by one with your own righteousness or with religious rituals and works. Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has blotted out all the sins of the world at once.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

<u>You must believe now.</u>

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Pastor Paul C. Jong has been easily and clearly conveying Jesus' salvation work according to the Word of the Bible to this day, so that many people can receive true remission of sins and return to God through just this one book. And together with his fellow workers, he continues to make tireless efforts even now to spread the gospel of water and the Spirit throughout the world.

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- **Bilingual books:** Approximately 370+
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Mark
Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit
(II)

PAUL C. JONG

Hephzibah Publishing House
A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
SEOUL, KOREA

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Mark seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (II)

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We offer a prayer of thanks to the Lord for giving us the Word of salvation and blessing us with the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit.

I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

I hope and pray that this book will help many souls be born again, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to everyone who worked hard with me.

I sincerely hope that the Lord will allow the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit to be spread throughout the world through those who believe in Jesus.

PAUL C. JONG

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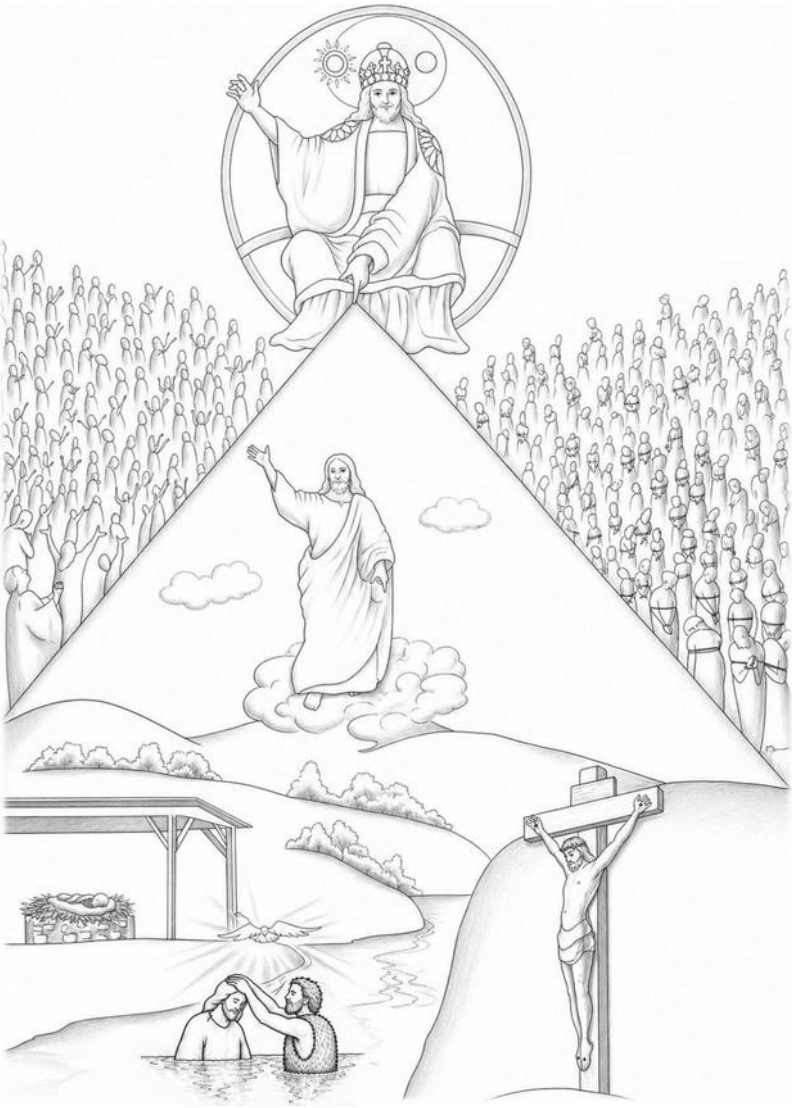

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Preface

Dear readers, it is before a problem that one cannot solve with one's own strength that a person first discovers his own limits. The bondage of evil spirits that no one can control, long illness, the news of death, and the sin that ceaselessly comes out from within the heart are not solved by human will and effort alone. But the One who accomplishes what man cannot do is Jesus Christ. This book plainly proclaims Jesus Christ, who comes to the place of despair, saves us from sin and sets us free from the power of Satan, and gives us life and true peace.

Jesus did not turn away from the person whom people had abandoned and isolated. Even when many people were pressing around Him, He recognized the one person who came forward in faith, and even in the face of death, when people were saying that everything was over, He said, *"Do not be afraid; only believe."* The Lord's compassion is not limited by a person's status, nation, or past. Anyone who does not assert his own qualifications but humbles himself before the word and seeks grace can come to Him.

Even so, we must not turn these events into a promise that if we believe in Jesus, every problem of the flesh and every worldly wish will surely be resolved. The miracles Jesus performed are signs showing that He is the Son of God and the Savior, who rules over sin, Satan, and death. Even when the flesh is healed, it dies someday, but the life obtained through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is eternal. The greatest grace Jesus has bestowed on us is the salvation by which He remitted all our sins and reconciled us to God.

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Sin is removed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross

What defiles a person before God is not the food that enters from outside or unwashed hands. Evil thoughts, covetousness, pride, murder, fornication, and deceit come out of a person's heart. Outward rules can make one's conduct orderly, but they cannot remove the sin of the heart. Neither can religious tradition and repeated ceremonies take the place of the word of God or achieve the complete remission of sin. True repentance is turning back from one's own righteousness and mistaken faith and believing, just as the word says, in the salvation God has already accomplished.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself, onto His own body, all the sins that come out of people's hearts and deeds. On the Cross He received the judgment of those sins in the place of sinners, and He rose from the dead and completed salvation. The person who believes in this gospel does not wash his sins away one by one, but receives the remission of all the sins of his lifetime once and for all. The assurance of salvation lies not in one's own feelings or good deeds, but in the righteousness Jesus has actually fulfilled.

In this volume there also appears, together with Jesus, who fills the hunger of the flesh, the mission of the disciples, who must share the Bread of life with the spiritually starving. It was not the disciples who produced the bread. They only distributed to the multitude the bread they had received from the Lord. The workers of the gospel, too, must not invent a new method of salvation or mix in the philosophy of man. They must receive just as it is the word of life that Jesus has completed, and distribute it to the whole world.

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Recognize the spiritual part and accept the word just as it is

Seeing many miracles and hearing the word at close hand does not mean that one's spiritual eyes open automatically. A person can confess Jesus as the Christ and yet seek only the success and glory he expects. A Christ who only fulfills the wishes of the flesh, while excluding Jesus' baptism and the Cross from salvation, is not the Savior the Bible testifies to. Jesus is the Christ, who took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and who, after receiving the judgment of all those sins on the Cross, saved us completely by rising from the dead.

The person whose spiritual eyes have been opened sees plainly where his sins have gone and where the judgment of those sins was ended. He also realizes that his own thoughts can come before the things of God, and denies himself. To deny oneself is not to remove one's own personality or to hate oneself. It is not to exalt one's own righteousness and the judgment of the flesh above the word, but to seek first, as one who is already saved, the benefit of the gospel and of souls.

Dear readers, do not chase only after miracles visible to the eye and the blessings of this present life. See plainly and believe how the Lord has removed your sins. Beware of the leaven called the tradition of men and your own thoughts, and fill your hearts with the pure food of the gospel. Believing in the salvation completed by the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, live, as those whose spiritual eyes and ears have been opened, as workers who share the Bread of life with starving souls. ✉

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CHAPTER

5

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Mark Chapter 5

< Mark 5:1-43 >

“Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, ‘What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.’ For He said to him, ‘Come out of the man, unclean spirit!’ Then He asked him, ‘What is your name?’ And he answered, saying, ‘My name is Legion; for we are many.’ Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, ‘Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.’ And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they

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came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.' And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled. Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.' So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, 'If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.' Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?' But His disciples said to Him, 'You see the

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multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'' And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.' While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.' And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, 'Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat."

1) Summary of the entire content

Mark chapter 5 records the events in which Jesus set free a man who was held by an unclean spirit, healed a woman who

had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years, and raised the dead daughter of Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue. The man who lived among the tombs was in so wretched a state that no one could control him even with chains, but when Jesus cast out the demons named Legion, he was restored to his right mind. Jesus told him to tell his family of the grace he had received, and he made known widely in the region of Decapolis what Jesus had done for him. Then, when Jairus the ruler of the synagogue pleaded with Him to save his dying daughter, Jesus set out for his house. On the way, a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years touched the garment of Jesus and was healed of her disease. Jesus sought out the woman, declared that her faith had saved her, and told her to go in peace. The news came that Jairus's daughter had died, but Jesus said, *"Do not be afraid; only believe,"* and then took the child by the hand and raised her up. This chapter shows the power of Jesus, who has authority even over demons, disease, and death, and His love that has compassion on a person whom no one could restore.

1. The demon-possessed man who lived among the tombs (verses 1–5)

When Jesus and His disciples arrived at the region of the Gadarenes on the other side of the sea, a man with an unclean spirit came out from among the tombs and met Jesus. He could not live a normal life within the community, but lived among the tombs. The tombs were a place that called to mind death and uncleanness, and they show how far he had been removed from life and peace.

People tried many times to bind his hands and feet with chains and shackles, but they could not control him. He displayed strength enough to pull apart the chains and break the

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shackles in pieces, but that strength was no proof of freedom. No one could control him, and he himself could not govern his own life.

Night and day he cried out among the tombs and in the mountains and hurt his own body with stones. The rule of the unclean spirit did not give him freedom and happiness, but brought him isolation, self-destruction, and suffering. People found no solution except to keep him bound, but outward restraint could not solve his fundamental problem.

This event is a record concerning a man who was under the rule of an unclean spirit in a particular way. We must not conclude that every mental illness or abnormal behavior is demon possession. Illnesses need medical diagnosis and treatment, and we must not fear or condemn those who suffer, but protect and care for them.

2. The demons named Legion, who surrendered before the authority of Jesus (verses 6–10)

The man with the unclean spirit saw Jesus from afar, ran to Him, and bowed down before Him. The demon called Jesus the *"Son of the Most High God"* and pleaded with Him not to torment him. The demon recognized who Jesus was and could not resist before His authority.

When Jesus commanded him, *"Come out of the man, unclean spirit!"* and asked his name, he answered that his name was *"Legion."* He explained that it was because they were many. The name *"Legion"* shows that not just one or two demons but many demons were ruling over the man.

People could not control him, but the many demons had to submit before a single word of command from Jesus. Jesus is not One who fights with demons on equal terms; He is the One who holds the authority to command them and cast them out.

The demons repeatedly begged Him not to send them out of that region. The fact that they begged Jesus shows that they could not decide for themselves the place or the way of their activity, and that they were under the permission of Jesus.

3. The demons that entered the herd of swine and drowned in the sea (verses 11–13)

Near the mountains there, a large herd of about two thousand swine was feeding. The demons begged Jesus to send them into the swine so that they might enter them. When Jesus gave them permission, the unclean spirits came out of the man and entered the swine.

The herd of swine that the demons entered ran down the steep place and drowned in the sea. This event shows that the nature of demons lies not in preserving life but in destroying it. If the demons had kept on ruling over the man, he too could only have come to destruction, but Jesus delivered him from that power.

The death of so many swine was a great economic loss to the people of that day. The center of the passage, however, does not lie in treating the loss of property lightly, but in revealing the reality of the evil power that had been destroying one man and the authority of Jesus who set him free.

4. The restored man and the residents who asked Jesus to leave (verses 14–17)

Those who fed the swine fled and told this in the town and in the surrounding country, and people came to see what had happened. They saw the man who had once been seized by the Legion of demons sitting clothed and in his right mind.

The man had come to be in a state completely different from before. The man who had wandered among the tombs,

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crying out and hurting his own body, was now sitting near Jesus. People had not been able to hold him down with chains, but the word of Jesus restored his inner being from its root.

Yet the residents, seeing this amazing restoration, feared rather than rejoiced. When those who had witnessed the event explained what had happened to the demon-possessed man and to the herd of swine, the residents asked Jesus to leave their region.

The passage does not explain in detail what exactly they feared most. What is clear is that rather than welcoming the one restored man and the authority of Jesus, they asked Jesus to leave. When his livelihood, his property, and his familiar order are shaken, a person can reject even the work of God that restores life.

5. The man who was sent to tell the grace he had received (verses 18–20)

When Jesus got into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged that he might be with Him. He would not have wanted to leave the side of Jesus, who had delivered him. But Jesus did not grant his request and told him to return to his family.

Jesus told him to let his family know what great things the Lord had done for him and how He had had compassion on him. He was not a man of professional knowledge or long training, but he clearly knew what Jesus had done in his own life. That was the most vivid testimony he could give.

He went back and proclaimed in the region of Decapolis the great things Jesus had done for him, and all the people marveled. The way of following Jesus was not the same for everyone. Some were called to travel together with Jesus, and this man was sent back to his own family and region to testify.

The grace we have received is not something to keep only as a personal experience, but something we must pass on to others. It is important to make known what Jesus has done, with a changed life and truthful words, especially to our closest family and in the places of our daily life.

6. Jairus, who came to Jesus for his dying daughter (verses 21–24)

When Jesus crossed over again by boat to the other side, many people gathered around Him. Then Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, came to Jesus and fell at His feet. A ruler of the synagogue was a man of religious responsibility and standing in the local community, but in the face of his daughter's death, his position and ability were no solution at all.

Jairus said that his little daughter was at the point of death, and he earnestly asked Jesus to come and lay His hands on her so that she would live. With love for his daughter and desperation, he humbled himself before the people and sought help from Jesus.

Jesus heard Jairus's plea and went with him. Jesus showed compassion not only on the demon-possessed man abandoned by society but also on the daughter of a ruler of the synagogue. The grace of Jesus is not limited by a person's social position or background.

On the way to Jairus's house, however, a great crowd was surrounding Jesus and pressing in on Him. To Jairus, whose daughter's condition was critical, every delay would have felt agonizing. In the midst of it, another desperate person came to Jesus.

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7. The woman who suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years (verses 25–29)

There was a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years. She had suffered greatly while being treated by many physicians and had used up all the property she had, but the disease was not cured; rather, it grew worse.

According to the regulations of cleanness in Leviticus, a person with a continuous flow of blood was regarded as unclean. So this woman's suffering may not have stopped at physical disease and economic hardship, but may have included religious and social isolation as well. The span of twelve years shows that her suffering was not momentary.

The woman heard about Jesus, came in among the crowd, and touched His garment from behind. She believed that she would be saved if she only touched His clothes. It may have been hard for her to reveal herself before others or to make her request to Jesus openly, but with desperate faith she came to Jesus.

When she touched the garment of Jesus, the bleeding stopped at once, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the disease. The disease that many physicians and all her property could not solve was healed immediately by the power of Jesus.

8. Jesus, who sought out the woman and confirmed her faith and peace (verses 30–34)

Jesus knew that power had gone out of Him, and asked in the crowd who had touched His clothes. The disciples could not understand why He asked who had touched Him when so many people were pressing in on Him. But Jesus distinguished between the crowd's accidental contact as they pressed in and the act of the woman who touched Him in faith.

Jesus did not ask because He did not know who had touched Him; He led the woman not to stop at slipping away in hiding, but to make known what had happened to her. The woman, fearing and trembling, fell down before Jesus and told Him the whole truth.

Jesus did not rebuke the woman or push her away as an unclean person. Rather, He called her *"Daughter"* and declared that her faith had saved her. And He told her to go in peace and be healed of her affliction.

The woman received not only physical healing but also the personal comfort of Jesus and His open confirmation. The one who had had to hide before people could now return in peace, called a daughter by Jesus.

Many people surrounded Jesus, but not all of them experienced the same grace. Simply being outwardly near Jesus and relying on Him in faith are different things. The woman came believing in the power of Jesus at the place where all her own methods and possibilities had come to an end.

9. Jairus, who was called to believe in the face of his daughter's death (verses 35–40)

While Jesus was speaking to the woman, people came from Jairus's house and reported that his daughter had died. They said there was no need to trouble Jesus any further, since she was already dead. From the human point of view, a disease may hold some possibility of cure, but death was the state where every possibility had ended.

Hearing what they said, Jesus told Jairus, *"Do not be afraid; only believe."* Until his daughter died, Jairus could hold the faith that Jesus was able to heal her, but now he had to believe in Jesus as the One who rules even over death.

Jesus permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James,

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and John the brother of James. When they arrived at Jairus's house, people were weeping loudly and making a great commotion. Jesus said that the child was not dead but sleeping, and the people ridiculed His words.

That Jesus described death as sleep does not mean that the child had not actually died. It was a word showing that Jesus would soon raise the child, and that before His authority even death could be overcome, as one wakes a person who sleeps.

The people saw the death before their eyes, and Jesus spoke of the power of God beyond that death. Faith is not denying reality; it is trusting the word and the authority of Jesus, who is greater than reality.

10. Jesus, who raised Jairus's daughter from death (verses 41–43)

Jesus took the child's parents and the three disciples and entered where the child was. Then He took the child by the hand and said, *"Talitha, cumi."* This means, *"Little girl, I say to you, arise."*

When Jesus spoke, the twelve-year-old girl immediately arose and walked. Just as the demons had obeyed the command of Jesus and the flow of blood had stopped before His power, death also could not defy the word of Jesus.

Those who saw this were greatly amazed. Jesus commanded them strictly that no one should know of it, and told them to give the girl something to eat. Even after performing an amazing miracle, Jesus attentively cared for the child's practical needs.

The passage does not fully explain why Jesus told them not to make this known. But Jesus did not want people to flock to Him looking only at miracles, or to misunderstand Him as a worldly man of power. Miracles are signs that show the

authority of Jesus, but they do not take the place of the whole mission of Jesus.

The woman with the flow of blood had suffered for twelve years, and Jairus's daughter was twelve years old. One person's life had been wasting away little by little over long years, and the other lost her life at a young age. But Jesus ruled over both long disease and sudden death, and restored life to them both.

The core meaning of Mark chapter 5

First, Jesus subdued the power of many demons with a single word, and made whole a man whom no one could control or restore.

Second, unclean spirits isolate and destroy a person, but Jesus sets a person free and sends him back to his community and family.

Third, the person who has received grace from Jesus must tell those near him and his neighbors what has happened to him, and testify of His compassion.

Fourth, the social standing of Jairus and the marginalized situation of the woman with the flow of blood were different, but both came to Jesus with problems they could not solve by their own ability.

Fifth, many people were surrounding Jesus, but the woman with the flow of blood relied on Him in faith and received healing and peace.

Sixth, Jesus told Jairus to believe His word and authority more than the death before his eyes, and He raised the dead child with His word.

Seventh, Jesus is the Son of God, who rules over demons, disease, and even death, and He is the One who gives life and restoration even at the place where every human method and

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possibility has come to an end.

Eighth, Jesus is not One who only displays great power; He meets the suffering person face to face, turns fear into peace, and cares even for concrete needs.

To sum up in one sentence, Mark chapter 5 is the chapter that shows that Jesus subdued the powers of demons, disease, and death to save those whom no one could restore, and gave deliverance, peace, and new life to those who believed in Him and came to Him in the midst of fear and despair.

2) Mark chapter 5 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Mark chapter 5 shows three states that cannot be solved by human strength. The man held by the Legion of demons could not be controlled even with chains; the woman with the flow of blood used up all she had over twelve years, but her disease only grew worse; and Jairus's daughter finally came to death. Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, these events show that man, placed under the power of sin, Satan, and death, cannot be saved by his own strength, and that only by believing the gospel Jesus completed does he receive deliverance, the remission of sins, and new life. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind, and carrying those sins He was judged on the Cross, and He rose from the dead and completed salvation. Whoever believes this fact receives the remission of all sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes a child of God. Moreover, the person who has received the remission of sins, like the restored man of the Gadarenes, passes on to others the compassion he has received, and comes to believe and rely on

the word of Jesus even amid the problems of life and the fear of death.

1. The man who dwelt among the tombs and the state of man under sin (verses 1–5)

The man Jesus met in the region of the Gadarenes was held by an unclean spirit and living among the tombs. Night and day he cried out and hurt his own body with stones, and no one could control him. Though he was alive, he made his dwelling among the tombs where the dead lay, and he lived a destructive life, cut off from community and family.

This event is a record about one man who was actually ruled by an unclean spirit. Therefore we must not conclude that every mental illness or abnormal behavior is demon possession. Diseases of body and mind must receive the diagnosis and treatment they need, and we must not condemn or fear those who suffer.

If we apply it in the light of the gospel, however, this man's wretched state makes us think of the spiritual state of man living under the deception of sin and Satan. Man is born with sin and lives committing sin, following the covetousness and evil thoughts of his heart. He chases after money, honor, and pleasure as if they would make him happy, but they can instead rule his heart and wound him.

Sin pulls man away from God, breaks down his relationships with others, and finally drags him to death and judgment. A person can resolve by his own will not to commit sin, but he cannot remove by himself the root of sin in his heart and all the sins he has already committed. He must first acknowledge that he is under sin and that he is a being who absolutely needs a Savior.

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2. The chains that could bind a man but could not make him whole (verses 3–5)

People bound the demon-possessed man with shackles and chains many times. But he pulled apart the chains and broke the shackles in pieces. People tried to limit his behavior, but they could not restore him to a right mind and a whole life.

On the level of the gospel, the chains make us think of the human rules and methods that outwardly restrain a sinner's conduct. Law, morality, and education are needed to restrain evil conduct to some degree and to keep order in society. But they cannot wash away the sin already written on the heart or make a person righteous before God.

The Law of God is also a holy standard that makes us realize sin, but it is not a means of salvation that removes sin. The Law reveals what a person has done wrong and makes him realize that he is a sinner before God. Before the Law, a sinner must acknowledge his own inability and come to Jesus, who removes sin.

With religious rules and repeated prayers of repentance one may tidy up his outward appearance, but unless he believes the righteousness Jesus accomplished, the sin of his heart remains as it is. To solve sin, we need the power of the Savior, which is stronger than human resolve. Jesus is not One who merely holds a person down outwardly, but the One who fundamentally sets him free from the power of sin and Satan.

3. The authority of Jesus, stronger than the Legion of demons (verses 6–13)

Inside the demon-possessed man there was not one demon but demons so many as to be called *"Legion."* Man could not control him, but the demons recognized Jesus as the Son of the Most High God and fell down before Him. When the command

of Jesus was given, they had to come out of the man.

This shows that Jesus is not One who contends with Satan on equal terms, but the Son of God, stronger than Satan. Satan can bind people with sin and lies, but he cannot overcome the authority of Jesus.

The core work by which Jesus saves people from the power of sin and Satan appears in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus went to John, who represented all mankind, and took upon Himself all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Then, carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and received the judgment of sin, and He rose from the dead and defeated the power of Satan and death.

Satan condemns people on the ground of their sins and stirs up fear. But for the person who believes the fact that Jesus took on all sins and received even their judgment, there remains no ground of sin on which Satan can condemn him. The person who believes the gospel does not overcome Satan by his own will, but escapes from Satan's rule through the salvation Jesus completed.

4. The destruction of the herd of swine and Jesus, who restores life (verses 11–13)

When the unclean spirits entered the herd of swine, about two thousand swine ran down the steep place and drowned in the sea. This event clearly shows that the aim of unclean spirits is not to save and protect life but to destroy it.

Satan deceives people as if sin would give them freedom and satisfaction. But if a person keeps following the desires of sin, his heart is never satisfied and is seized by ever greater greed. Even if he gains wealth, pleasure, and honor, the problem of death and judgment is not solved.

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Jesus, on the other hand, is not One who came to destroy people, but One who came to save them. He sacrificed Himself to save sinners. By receiving in their place the judgment that sinners had to receive and by giving up His own life, He has given the remission of sins and eternal life to those who believe.

The life of one soul is more important than material gain. The people of the region of the Gadarenes saw the death of the herd of swine and their economic loss, and asked Jesus to leave. A person can refuse the grace of Jesus, who saves the soul, out of fear that his possessions and his familiar life will be shaken. We need a heart that counts the salvation of the soul more precious than its own gain.

5. The man who sat clothed and in his right mind near Jesus (verses 14–17)

When the people came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been demon-possessed sitting clothed and in his right mind. Before he met Jesus he had wandered among the tombs, hurting himself, but now he was enjoying peace at Jesus' side.

To receive the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a matter of a sinner improving himself little by little through his own efforts. It is a fundamental change, in which the sin deserving condemnation disappears from the heart that was full of sin, and the sinner obtains the new status of a righteous person.

The ground of this change is not man's good deeds but the salvation Jesus accomplished. Because Jesus took on all sins with the baptism He received from John and received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, whoever believes this fact becomes a person without sin before God. The risen Jesus gives new life to those who believe, and the Holy Spirit comes upon the heart of the person who has received the remission of

sins and testifies that he is a child of God.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, one's fleshly weaknesses and wrong thoughts do not all disappear at once. But such a person is no longer under the condemnation of sin; he is a person who lives by faith, led by the word and the Holy Spirit. Like the man who sat near Jesus, he begins a new life of hearing the word and entrusting his life to God.

6. Passing on the compassion received to family and neighbors (verses 18–20)

The restored man wanted to get into the boat together with Jesus. But Jesus told him to return home and let his family know what great things the Lord had done and how He had had compassion on him.

He did not go and tell how excellent a person he had become; he testified what Jesus had done for him. To make known what state he had been in and how Jesus had delivered him—this was his first mission.

The person who has received the remission of sins must also proclaim not himself but the salvation Jesus accomplished. He proclaims the fact that he was a person born with sin who could only be judged, but that Jesus removed all his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Preaching the gospel is not laying yet another religious duty on people. It is delivering the glad news to a person who lives in fear and condemnation, bound by the chains of sin, that Jesus has already solved all his sins, so that he too may receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit.

The person to whom the grace he has received is clear also has a clear message to preach. Like the restored man of the Gadarenes, even a person who lacks professional knowledge

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can share with those close to him the gospel he has believed and the compassion of Jesus.

7. The woman with the flow of blood and the problem of sin that remains unsolved (verses 25–29)

The woman with the flow of blood had been treated by many physicians for twelve years, suffering greatly, and had used up all the property she had, but the disease was not cured and grew worse. She used every human method, but she could not solve the root of her disease.

The passage does not say that this woman's disease arose because of her personal sins. Therefore we must not interpret physical disease simply as the result of an individual's sin or lack of faith. If we apply it in the light of the gospel, however, her disease, which no human method could fundamentally cure, makes us think of man striving to solve his own sin and failing.

To erase the pangs of conscience, a person may do good deeds, serve, and practice self-denial, or pray prayers of repentance over and over. But he cannot undo by his own deeds the sins he has already committed, nor can he keep himself from sinning again. His heart may feel at ease for a while, but the root of sin and the judgment of God are not solved by human methods.

The only One who can wash away sin is Jesus. Jesus took upon Himself all the sins that come out of man's heart and deeds with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, carried those sins and was judged on the Cross, and rose again and became the everlasting Savior. Rather than trying still more methods, the sinner must know and believe through the word the salvation Jesus has already accomplished.

8. The faith that touched the garment of Jesus, and the remission of sins (verses 27–34)

The woman with the flow of blood heard about Jesus and believed that she would be made well if she only touched His garment. Many people were surrounding Jesus and pressing in, but Jesus singled out the woman who touched Him in faith.

To believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not vaguely to respect Jesus or merely to acknowledge the fact that He is the Son of God. It is to receive into one's heart how Jesus actually took on and removed one's own sins.

To believe the fact that Jesus took over and bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John, received in my place on the Cross the judgment I was to receive, and rose again and justified me—this is the same as touching Jesus in faith. The power of salvation does not come from faith itself as a human act; it comes from Jesus, the object of faith, and from the salvation He completed.

Jesus called the woman *"Daughter"* and said that her faith had saved her. The person who receives the remission of sins also enters a personal relationship with God and becomes His child. The sin that was in his heart disappears, the Holy Spirit comes upon him, and he calls God Father.

The woman did not slip away in hiding, but came out before Jesus and told Him the whole truth. The person who has believed the gospel must also be able to confess clearly how he received the remission of sins. He testifies that he was saved by believing not his own deeds but what Jesus accomplished.

9. The words *"Do not be afraid; only believe"* (verses 35–40).

While Jesus was speaking to the woman with the flow of blood, people came from Jairus's house and reported that his daughter had died. They said there was no need to trouble Jesus

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any longer, since she was already dead. By human judgment, every possibility had ended.

But Jesus told Jairus, *"Do not be afraid; only believe."* Faith is not denying that the situation before one's eyes is hard. It is acknowledging the fact that the word and the authority of Jesus are greater than the reality.

Every person is born spiritually dead because of sin. No one can produce spiritual life with his own good deeds and will. But whoever believes the word that Jesus solved the problem of sin and death with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection receives new life.

"Only believe" does not mean to be strongly convinced of just any content. It means to believe the facts of salvation that God has spoken. If Jesus said that He took on all sins, we must believe that all sins were passed on to Him; and if He received all the judgment on the Cross, we must believe that there is no judgment of sin left for us to receive again.

Salvation is not achieved by adding together half of man's deeds and half of his faith. Jesus accomplished the whole of salvation, and man receives that fact by believing. Such faith is not a human merit but the channel through which one receives the grace God has bestowed.

10. Jesus, who gave new life to the dead girl (verses 41–43)

Jesus took the dead girl by the hand and said, *"Talitha, cumi."* It means, *"Little girl, I say to you, arise."* When the word of Jesus was proclaimed, the girl immediately arose and walked.

Death cannot be reversed by human ability, but in the word of Jesus, the Lord of life, there is the authority to raise even the dead. Jesus is God, who rules not only over the wind and the sea, over demons and disease, but even over death.

Seen in the light of the gospel, the remission of sins is the event in which a person who was spiritually dead receives new life. When a person believes the fact that Jesus took on sins with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again, the sinner becomes righteous, and a child of death becomes a child of God. The Holy Spirit comes upon his heart and causes him to begin a new spiritual life.

Jesus told them to give the girl, now alive, something to eat. The person who has gained new life also needs continual spiritual food. After receiving the remission of sins, one must keep hearing the word of God, go over the gospel again and again, and let his faith grow under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Eating the word after receiving the remission of sins is not a work done in order to be saved again. It is so that the life already received may grow up healthy and bear the fruit of faith. Through the word we discover our weaknesses, confirm again the perfect salvation of Jesus, and receive strength to serve other souls.

We must also distinguish between the healing of physical disease and the everlasting remission of sins. God has the power to heal disease, so the believer may pray and ask for His help. But we must not conclude that every disease of the body will surely be healed in this world at the time and in the way we desire. On the other hand, the promise of salvation, that He gives the remission of all sins and eternal life to everyone who believes the gospel Jesus completed, is certain.

The core meaning of Mark chapter 5 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, the demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes was a man actually ruled by an evil spirit, and in the light of the

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gospel he makes us think of the state of man, unable to save himself under the deception of sin and Satan.

Second, just as the chains limited the man's behavior but could not make him whole, law, morality, and religious acts can reveal or restrain sin, but they cannot completely wash away the sin of the heart.

Third, Jesus is stronger than the Legion of demons; He is the Son of God, who breaks the power of sin, Satan, and death and sets believers free.

Fourth, just as the woman with the flow of blood could not solve the root of her disease by any human method, the sinner cannot solve the problem of sin with good deeds, prayers of repentance, and self-cultivation.

Fifth, true faith is not vaguely relying on Jesus; it is accepting, just as the word says, the fact that Jesus took on all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged on the Cross, and then rose again.

Sixth, whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins, receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God, and escapes the condemnation of death and obtains eternal life.

Seventh, the person who has received the remission of sins, like the restored man of the Gadarenes, must pass on to his family and neighbors the compassion and the salvation Jesus has bestowed on him.

Eighth, even after one receives the remission of sins, the hardships and fears of life can still come, but we must believe the fact that Jesus is Almighty God and rely on Him through the word and prayer.

Ninth, we must not simply identify physical disease with personal sin, and we must also distinguish between the promise of the everlasting remission of sins and physical healing in this world.

To sum up in one sentence, Mark chapter 5 shows the fact that Jesus has compassion on the person who cannot save himself under the power of sin, Satan, and death, delivers him from all sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, and gives him new life and the Holy Spirit, and that He causes the saved person to pass on that grace and to believe and rely on Jesus in the midst of every fear. ✉

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Mark Chapter 5

Jesus Christ, who rules over evil spirits, disease, and death

Introduction

Mark chapter 5 is the chapter in which Jesus set free a man possessed by the Legion of demons, healed a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years, and raised up the dead daughter of Jairus. The three events show that Jesus is the Son of God, who rules over evil spirits, disease, and death alike.

The man of the region of Gadara lay in a wretched state that no human power could control, but he was restored whole by the word of Jesus. Jesus did not leave him as a man cut off from his community, but sent him back to his family to tell of the grace he had received. This shows that the person saved by the Lord must escape from his former bondage, live a new life, and pass that grace on to others.

The woman with the flow of blood and Jairus stood in different circumstances, but both came to Jesus with problems they could not solve by their own strength. The woman's faith was not a superstition that believed the clothes themselves held power, but trust that Jesus could heal her. Jairus needed the faith that relies on the word of Jesus rather than on human judgment, even in the face of the news that his daughter had died.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind; He paid the wages

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of sin on the Cross, and by rising again He defeated the power of sin and death. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins and gains everlasting life. This chapter does not stop at the solving of physical problems; it teaches us to believe in Jesus, who delivers us from sin and judgment, and so to obtain true life and the hope of the resurrection.

The man whom no one could control was made whole by the power of Jesus and became a witness who tells of the compassion he received

"Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.' For He said to him, 'Come out of the man, unclean spirit!' Then He asked him, 'What is your name?' And he answered, saying, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.' Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, 'Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.' And at once Jesus gave them permission.

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Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.' And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled" (Mark 5:1–20).

After Jesus had calmed the great windstorm, He arrived with His disciples at the region of the Gadarenes on the other side of the sea. He went from the Jewish territory of Galilee into a Gentile territory across the sea. The fact that there was a herd of swine also shows that this place was different from the living sphere of the Jews. Jesus crossed the boundaries of nation and region to seek out one suffering person.

When Jesus came out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came out from among the tombs and met Him. It seems that people, fearing him, had made him stay among the tombs away from the village. He was separated from family and neighbors, living in the space of the dead. Having lost human fellowship and rest, he lay under the shadow of death.

He had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he pulled them apart and broke them. People's attempts to bind

him may have been measures to protect both themselves and him, but outward restraint alone could not make him whole. The passage says, *"neither could anyone tame him,"* showing that every human means had reached its limit.

The chains could limit his behavior for a moment, but they could not drive out the unclean spirit that ruled him. This scene makes us think of the fact that man's institutions and discipline can restrain the deeds of sin to some degree, but cannot remove the fundamental sin of the heart. Education, law, and religious rules are necessary for society, but by themselves they cannot make a sinner born again or make him a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

The man cried out night and day among the tombs and in the mountains, and hurt his body with stones. The rule of the unclean spirit did not give him freedom and happiness; it brought him isolation, suffering, and self-destruction. Satan deceives people as if he were giving them freedom, but in the end he makes them slaves of sin and covetousness and destroys their souls and their lives.

Reading this event, we must not jump to the conclusion that every mental illness or every act of hurting one's own body is demon possession. The passage plainly states that in this man's case the cause was an unclean spirit, but it does not explain every disease in the same way. Those who suffer mental pain today need love and protection, not condemnation, and they should also receive appropriate medical help.

Yet this man's wretched condition is a powerful picture that shows the spiritual state of man placed under the deception of sin and Satan. A person thinks he lives freely, enjoying sin, but in reality he can be dragged around by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Trying to satisfy his own desires, he instead wounds himself and others, and in the end

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he meets death, the wages of sin, and the judgment of God.

The man saw Jesus from afar, ran to Him, and bowed down before Him. But it is hard to regard this act, in itself, as a confession of saving faith. The words that follow were cried out by the demons inside the man as they surrendered before the power of Jesus. They did not come near in order to obey Jesus; they fell down because they could not escape His command.

The demons called Jesus exactly *"Jesus, Son of the Most High God."* At that time many people did not know who Jesus was, but the demons knew His identity. But knowing facts about Jesus and believing and loving Him as one's Savior are different. Saving faith does not stop at knowing the name and the identity of Jesus as knowledge; it receives into the heart the salvation He accomplished.

The demons cried out, *"What have I to do with You?"* It meant that they wanted to have no dealings with Jesus and to keep on ruling that man. A sinner, too, while needing God's help, may hate to give up his own thoughts and desires and refuse to let God be involved in his life. But Jesus did not compromise with the evil power that was destroying one soul.

The plea *"do not torment me"* shows that the demons knew and feared the authority of Jesus to judge. They knew that they could not defy His command and that in the end they were beings who would be judged. The power of Satan and the demons is not a power equal to God. They are merely creatures placed under the permission and the command of Jesus, the Creator.

When Jesus asked his name, he answered, *"My name is Legion; for we are many."* The word *"Legion"* indicates that many demons were inside the man. It shows how serious his problem was; yet no matter how many evil spirits were

gathered together, they could not overcome a single word of command from Jesus.

The demons begged Him not to send them out of that region, and then asked Him to allow them to enter the herd of swine feeding near the mountain. Even they could not enter the swine without the permission of Jesus. This shows that Jesus holds the absolute authority that controls even the activities of evil spirits.

When Jesus permitted them, the unclean spirits came out of the man and entered the herd of almost two thousand swine. The herd ran violently down the steep place and drowned in the sea. This event revealed visibly that the demons had really gone out of the man, and it showed that the nature of evil spirits is not to save life but to destroy it.

The drowning of the herd of swine displays the destructive end toward which the rule of demons finally drives. Sin and greed seem at first to give a person satisfaction, but in the end they lead him to death. Yet we must not interpret this event as if it allowed us to treat animals carelessly or to make light of other people's property. The center of the passage lies in the authority of Jesus and the restoration of one man.

When those who fed the swine made this known in the city and in the country, many people came to the place. They saw the man who had been seized by the Legion of demons sitting clothed and in his right mind near Jesus. The man who had wandered naked among the tombs, hurting his own body, had recovered a human appearance and peace.

"Sitting and clothed and in his right mind"—this shows that the salvation of Jesus sets a person free from the power that destroys him and restores him to a whole life. He was no longer bound with chains, yet neither did he behave violently. The true freedom Jesus gave was not license to act as one's

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own desires please, but the freedom of escaping the power of evil and staying near the Lord in a right mind.

The people of the village saw this amazing change, but they feared rather than rejoiced. After hearing both how the demon-possessed man had been restored and how the herd of swine had drowned, they pleaded with Jesus to leave their region. The economic loss they had experienced and the change in their familiar life may have felt greater to them than the grace of one man's life being restored.

A person can see the power of Jesus and still not receive Him. If he feels it a burden that the Lord exposes his sins and desires and changes the standard of his life, he comes to ask the Savior to leave rather than to rejoice in Him. The reason people refuse the gospel is not only a lack of evidence. A heart that loves its own possessions, thoughts, and way of life more than the Lord can make a person refuse the gospel.

Jesus did not push back their demand by force and stay on. He got into the boat to leave that region. This does not mean that the Lord withdrew because He was powerless; He left them to the refusal they had chosen. If a person keeps on refusing the gospel, no one can guarantee that the same opportunity will be given forever. Therefore the present, in which we hear the gospel, is the time to receive the grace.

The man who had been demon-possessed begged that he might be with Jesus. The people of the village asked Jesus to depart, but this man wanted to follow Him. It was natural that a person who had received such great grace from the Lord should come to want to be with Him.

But Jesus did not grant his plea, and told him to return home. That his plea was not granted does not mean that Jesus rejected him. Jesus entrusted him with a mission more fitting for him. He had to tell his family and relatives, who knew best

what condition he had been in and how the Lord had had compassion on him.

The words *"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you"* show an important content of preaching the gospel. He was not to boast of his own ability or resolve, but to tell of the great things the Lord had done and of the Lord's compassion. The evidence of salvation lies not in boasting how excellent a person one has become, but in testifying how great a grace the Lord has bestowed.

This man did not stop at speaking to his house and his relatives, but proclaimed in the region of Decapolis the great things Jesus had done. Jesus left a healed man as a witness in a region where He Himself did not stay long. The people who had once feared him now came to hear through him of the power and the compassion of Jesus.

In verse 19 Jesus said, *"what great things the Lord has done for you,"* and verse 20 records that the man proclaimed *"all that Jesus had done for him."* What Jesus had done was testified as what the Lord had done. This shows that Jesus is not a mere prophet but the Lord God, who saves people from the power of evil spirits.

This event of being set free from demons and the receiving of the remission of sins must be understood as distinct. The passage records an actual event in which Jesus drove out evil spirits. The fact itself that the demons went out does not mean the everlasting remission of all sins. But this event is a sign showing that Jesus is the Son of God, who would break the power of sin, Satan, and death and save sinners.

Not everyone is demon-possessed in the same form as this man, but every sinner is born a slave of sin and lives under the influence of Satan's lies. A person thinks himself good and

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sound, but when he stands before the word of God, it is revealed that he is a sinner, out of whose heart come evil thoughts, covetousness, pride, and hatred. If he does not realize his fundamental sinfulness, he cannot know why the salvation of Jesus is necessary either.

Jesus had compassion on those placed under sin and judgment, and to save them He put on flesh and came to this world. With the baptism He received from John, He took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. And carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, receiving in their place all the punishment of sin, and He rose from the dead on the third day.

Just as the chains that bound the man of Gadara could not solve his fundamental problem, the Law and religious acts alone cannot remove man's sin. The sinner does not wash away his own sins; he must believe the fact that Jesus took on even his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. The Cross of Jesus is the place of judgment where He paid completely the punishment of the sins He had taken on.

Jesus died on the Cross and rose again, and so defeated the power of sin, Satan, and death. Whoever believes with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, made up of the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, receives the remission of all sins once and for all. The Holy Spirit comes upon his heart, and he is no longer a person who belongs to sin and Satan, but becomes a child of God.

Even to the person who has received the remission of sins, the desires of the flesh and the temptations of Satan can come. But the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart and helps him, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to discern evil thoughts and overcome them. The believer must not try to hold out by the strength of his own will alone, but must remain in the word

and prayer and keep the faith together with the church.

To be saved by believing the gospel is not merely to join a religion or to correct one's living habits a little. It is to believe that all sins have disappeared through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, and to receive the Holy Spirit and live as a new life. In the saved person there appears a change: he hates the sin that was destroying him, follows the will of God, and seeks to pass on to others the grace he has received.

Even so, the saved person must not make his own changed conduct the ground of his salvation. The man of Gadara did not heal himself; Jesus had compassion on him and made him whole. In the same way, our salvation also is not the result of good deeds or willpower, but the gift of God, received by believing the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished.

The first mission field of a saved person may be not a distant, unfamiliar place, but his own home and the people closest to him. Our family knows our past and our weaknesses well, and so they see not only our words but also our changed life. When we preach the gospel, we must not exalt ourselves, but clearly testify how Jesus washed away sin and had compassion on us.

This section shows the fact that no one stands too far from the salvation of Jesus. Even the man whom family and neighbors had given up on and whom no one could control became whole when Jesus spoke. Therefore we must not judge a person's possibility of salvation by his past and present appearance alone, or give up preaching the gospel to him.

At the same time, this passage warns that people can see the power of Jesus and yet send Him away. The people of Gadara witnessed an amazing work, but they did not receive Jesus. A person can refuse the Lord who gives life in order to keep his

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worldly possessions and his familiar life. But the person who acknowledges his own sin and wretchedness and accepts the Lord's compassion escapes the power of evil and gains true freedom.

Jesus is the Son of God, greater than the power of sin, Satan, and death. He sought out a man who seemed useless and thrown away, made him whole, and raised him up as a witness who preaches the gospel. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also remember the compassion he has received, and must pass on to his family, his neighbors, and the world the great salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Jairus the ruler of the synagogue believed that Jesus alone could save his dying daughter, and fell at His feet

"Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.' So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him" (Mark 5:21–24).

After Jesus had made the man possessed by the Legion of demons whole in the region of the Gadarenes, He crossed back over by boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus came to the seashore, a great multitude gathered to Him. For

the news had spread widely that He healed the sick, cast out demons, and preached the word with authority.

The people of the region of Gadara asked Jesus to leave their region, but the people across the sea waited for Him and gathered in a great crowd. Thus, even hearing of the same power of Jesus, people responded differently. One person pushes the Lord away, fearing that change will come to his life, and another comes to the Lord with a problem he cannot solve by his own strength.

In the great crowd there was Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue. A ruler of the synagogue was a man of social standing, who managed the synagogue where the Jews gathered to read the Law and worship, and who oversaw the order of worship. He had religious knowledge and the respect of the people, but he could not solve the problem of his dying daughter.

A person's position, wealth, and religious career have no power of salvation at all in the face of death. In ordinary times he may think that he possesses many things, but when he meets something that threatens life, the limits of man are exposed. Jairus, too, could not save his daughter by his standing as a ruler of the synagogue, and in the end he had to come to Jesus and seek help.

When Jairus saw Jesus, he fell at His feet. At that time some of the religious leaders were denouncing Jesus and discussing how to kill Him, but Jairus counted the life of his dying daughter more important than the eyes of the people. He laid down his position and his dignity, and lowered himself before Jesus to the place of a man who must receive help.

The act of falling at the feet of Jesus shows the fact that Jairus acknowledged his own inability. True faith does not begin from claiming that one has the ability to solve things

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oneself. Realizing that he cannot solve the problem of sin and death with his own strength and righteousness, and coming to Jesus Christ, who has the power to save—this is the starting point of faith.

The passage tells us that Jairus begged Jesus earnestly and repeatedly. He did not make one formal request and turn back. With the desperate heart of a father who loved his daughter, he pleaded with Jesus again and again for help. In his plea were contained both the longing that Jesus would surely save his daughter and the faith that relied on His power.

That he begged Him much does not mean that the act itself of mechanically repeating the same words became a merit that obtained the answer. God is not One who receives the number of words or the amount of prayer as a price and then bestows grace. Jairus's repeated pleading was the expression of a desperate faith that he had no other solution and relied on Jesus alone.

In the words *"My little daughter lies at the point of death"* appears Jairus's deep love for his daughter. The passage that follows shows that this child was twelve years old. The life of his young daughter was fading away before the father's eyes, but he did not remain in despair; he came to Jesus, the Lord of life.

Jairus begged, *"Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."* He believed that if Jesus came to his house in person and laid His hands on his daughter, she would be healed of her disease and live. He acknowledged the power of Jesus, but as to how that power should be displayed, he proposed the way he himself could understand.

Jairus's faith was not yet a faith that had reached complete understanding. He did not fully know that Jesus could heal his daughter from afar with only a word, and that even if she died,

He could raise her again as the Lord of life. But Jesus did not refuse him because of his lacking understanding. Starting from the faith he had, Jesus led him into deeper faith.

A person may not understand every truth completely when he first hears the gospel. What matters is not to hold stubbornly to the completeness of one's own thought, but to come to Jesus and learn His word. The Lord does not turn away the person who seeks Him with a sincere heart, but makes his faith grow through the word.

The words of verse 23, *"that she may be healed, and she will live,"* mean first of all that the dying child would be delivered from her disease and recover the life of her body. We must not conclude from this verse alone that Jairus's daughter received the everlasting remission of sins. But the power of Jesus, who delivers a person from disease and death, reveals that He is the Savior, who will save sinners from everlasting destruction.

Jesus heard Jairus's plea and went with him. There were many people at the seashore, but the Lord did not treat lightly one father's plea and one dying child. Jesus went with Jairus not because of his social position, but with the compassion that pities life.

Jairus would have hoped that Jesus would arrive at his house while his daughter was still alive. But the way was delayed because of the woman with the flow of blood, and meanwhile he even came to hear the news that his daughter had died. This section does not yet show that outcome, but it prepares for the fact that the faith of Jairus, who had begun going home with Jesus, would meet a greater test.

Faith is not something we keep only when the result we want appears immediately after we ask Jesus. Even while the Lord is going with us, things may be delayed or seem to grow

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even worse. At such a time we must believe who Jesus is and what He says rather than the circumstances visible to our eyes. True faith holds on to the word of God, not to one's own expectations and senses.

The words *"So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him"* show that many people were near Jesus. But not everyone who was physically close to Jesus had the same faith. Following Jesus to watch Him and entrusting one's life and salvation to Him are different.

Today also, the outward fact that one attends church and hears the word of the Bible does not by itself bring the remission of sins. A person can hold knowledge about Jesus and carry on religious activities while still not acknowledging that he is a person who must be saved from sin and judgment. Saving faith is the faith that receives into one's own heart the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

Just as Jairus's daughter was close to death, every person lies under spiritual death and the judgment of God because of sin. No one knows when the life of his body will end, and after death there is no more opportunity to solve his sins. Therefore we must not think that someone else will believe in our place, but must hear the gospel and believe it with the heart while we are alive.

Jesus, though He is the Son of God, put on human flesh and came to this world to save those placed under sin and death. With the baptism He received from John, He took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. And carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and so received all the punishment of sin in our place.

The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist was God's righteous way by which He, who had no sin, took over all the sins of sinners. The Cross was the place of judgment

where He paid in full, with His blood, the wages of the sins He had taken on. Jesus was buried and rose again on the third day, defeating sin and death and completing our everlasting salvation.

Just as Jairus came to Jesus because he could not save his daughter, the sinner must acknowledge that he cannot give life to his own soul by his deeds, and must come to Jesus. Whoever believes with the heart the word that all his sins were already solved through the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of all sins once and for all and gains everlasting life.

To believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not to move God with one's own earnestness or religious zeal. It is to accept, just as the word says, the salvation God has already accomplished through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. Upon the heart of the person who believes this gospel and receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes and testifies that he is a child of God.

Jairus's plea also teaches us the faith that brings a family's trouble to the Lord. Parents cannot solve every problem of their children in their place, but they can pray for their children and guide them with the word of God. Especially, to pray that their children may hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe it, and receive the remission of sins, and to teach them the gospel accurately, is an important task entrusted to parents.

But the faith of parents cannot take the place of the child's own personal faith. That Jairus came to Jesus for his daughter was precious, but everlasting salvation is received when each person believes with his own heart the gospel that saved him. If we love our family, we must not seek only that they prosper in this world, but must preach the gospel so that their souls may

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receive the remission of sins and gain everlasting life.

Also, to pray to Jesus when one is sick does not mean to refuse appropriate treatment or to act recklessly in order to prove the size of one's faith. One can receive medical help and still believe that the sovereignty over life belongs to God, and pray humbly. The answer to prayer must always be entrusted to the will and the way God has appointed.

This section teaches the fact that salvation of Jesus is far more important than a person's pride and social status. Jairus the ruler of the synagogue acknowledged his own inability before his dying daughter and fell at the feet of Jesus. The sinner too must lay down his own righteousness and religious boasting and come to Jesus Christ, who saved him with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus heard Jairus's plea and gladly went along the way with him. In the same way, the Lord does not turn away from the person who acknowledges his sin and inability and seeks salvation. Whoever believes, just as it is, the word Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection is delivered from sin and death and comes to enjoy everlasting life in the Holy Spirit.

The woman whom many physicians could not heal believed in the power of Jesus, came to Him, and received release from her disease and peace

"Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, 'If only I may

touch His clothes, I shall be made well.' Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?' But His disciples said to Him, 'You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, "Who touched Me?"' And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction'" (Mark 5:25–34).

While Jesus, having heard the plea of Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, was going to his house to heal his dying daughter, a woman appeared. It was a situation in which a great crowd was surrounding Jesus, pressing in and following Him, but Mark records in detail the long suffering of one person hidden in that crowd. Even while on an urgent journey, Jesus did not turn away from one suffering soul.

This woman had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years. Since it was a disease in which blood kept flowing out of her body, she would have gone through physical weakness and pain for a long time. Twelve years was not a short period that would pass if she only endured a little. The disease had long been pressing down her daily life, her relationships with people, and her expectations for the future.

According to the Law of the Old Testament, a person whose blood kept flowing was regarded as ceremonially unclean. The place where that person lay or sat, and the people who came in contact with him, also had to go through a certain procedure of cleansing. Therefore this woman most likely experienced not only physical suffering but also restrictions in

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worship and social life, and the loneliness of having to stay away from people.

The passage tells us that she had *"suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse."* She was not a person who had left her disease alone without making any effort. Seeking a cure, she had gone from physician to physician and used what she possessed, but the result was not recovery—only greater suffering, poverty, and a disease grown worse.

These words do not deny all medicine and physicians. God helps people through medicine and treatment as well. In this woman's case, they show the fact that every treatment available at that time had reached its limit. In a situation that human knowledge and property could not solve, she had to acknowledge that she could no longer heal herself by her own strength.

The woman's state makes us think of man's inability to solve the problem of sin. To erase the pangs of conscience, a person may do good deeds and practice austerities, and rely on religious ceremonies and repeated prayers of repentance. But such acts cannot remove the root of the heart that commits sin, nor can they solve the judgment of all the sins already committed. The more one tries to wash his sins by his own effort, the clearer it may only become that sin remains in his heart.

Even so, we must not conclude that the flow of blood itself arose because of some special sin of this woman. The Bible does not teach that every individual disease is the direct result of a specific sin the person committed. But the reality of a world in which disease and death exist shows that mankind is living in a world fallen because of sin, and it awakens us to the fact that man needs the Lord, who will save both his body and

his soul.

The woman heard the news of Jesus when her situation had become hardest. Faith is not something that springs up by itself in the heart without any content. She heard the news that Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, and restored desperate people, and through that word she came to believe the power of Jesus.

Believing the gospel also begins with hearing the word of God. Even if a person has realized his sin and his inability, if he has not heard how Jesus saved him, he cannot hold right faith. We must believe in Jesus not on the ground of our own feelings and guesses, but by hearing accurately the identity of Jesus and His saving work, which the Bible testifies.

The woman mingled in the crowd and drew near to Jesus from behind. She would have feared that her state, regarded as unclean under the Law, would become known, and it would also have been hard for her to speak of her disease openly before many people. So instead of speaking to Jesus directly, she tried to touch His garment without anyone knowing.

She believed in her heart, *"If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."* Here, to be "made well" means first of all to be healed of the disease she had suffered for twelve years. We must not regard this physical healing, in itself, as entirely identical with the everlasting remission of sins. But the power of Jesus, who saves from disease, shows that He is the Son of God, who saves people also from sin and death.

The garment of Jesus itself did not hold magical power. Nor does the same miracle happen if one obtains the same kind of garment or repeats the act of touching it. What the woman relied on was not the cloth but Jesus, who was wearing that garment. She believed that Jesus was the One who could heal her, and she came to Him.

In the woman's faith there was still a lacking understanding

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mixed in. She seems to have thought that she could touch His garment without Jesus knowing, receive healing, and quietly leave. But Jesus did not turn away from her faith with its lack; He called her out and let her know clearly whom she had believed and from whom she had received grace.

When the woman touched the garment of Jesus, the fountain of her blood was dried up at once. The bleeding that no treatment had been able to stop for twelve years stopped immediately, and the woman realized in her own body that the disease was healed. The power of Jesus did not take a long time or show its effect little by little; it healed the source of the disease at once.

This event also shows the fact that the holiness of Jesus is greater than man's uncleanness. By the general rule of the Law, when an unclean person touched another person, the uncleanness was regarded as passed on. But when the woman touched the garment of Jesus, Jesus did not become unclean; rather, the woman's uncleanness and disease disappeared. The life and holiness of Jesus made her dying body whole.

Jesus, knowing that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and asked, *"Who touched My clothes?"* This was not because His power had been taken away without His knowing, or because He had no idea who had touched His garment. The passage says that Jesus looked around to see her who had done this thing. The Lord led the woman not to leave in hiding, but to come forward and confess the fact of the grace she had received.

The disciples could not understand His asking who had touched Him when so many people were surrounding Jesus and pressing in on Him. Countless people may have come in contact with the body and the garment of Jesus, but the same work did not appear to them all. The contact of the crowd that

pushed and followed out of curiosity and the touch of the woman who believed and relied on His power were different.

Today too, many people can call on the name of Jesus, attend church, and come in contact with the Bible. But being outwardly near Jesus and believing with the heart the salvation He accomplished are different. Salvation does not come from contact with Christian culture or from repeating religious acts; it comes from believing the righteousness Jesus accomplished, according to the word.

The woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before Jesus, and told Him the whole truth. She may have feared rebuke for the fact that she, in a state regarded as unclean under the Law, had come into the crowd and touched the garment of Jesus. She would also have trembled before the holy power of Jesus, who knew even what had been done in secret.

Jesus did not rebuke her, but called her *"Daughter."* He warmly received the woman who had been pushed aside by people and had suffered alone. She was no longer a nameless person who had been healed in secret and disappeared, but became a person whom Jesus acknowledged and called—one who had received the compassion of God.

In Jesus' calling the woman out openly there was also the meaning of making her restoration plain before the community. People would have known the fact that she had long suffered from the flow of blood. As Jesus confirmed her healing, she could now return to her family, her neighbors, and the place of worship, no longer living hidden as an unclean person.

Jesus declared, *"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."* The woman was already feeling in her body that the disease had been healed, but Jesus confirmed that healing with His own word.

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Not only had the bleeding of her body stopped; she was now able to return released from fear, holding the peace the Lord gives.

The words *"your faith has made you well"* do not mean that faith itself held an independent power of healing. The power that healed the woman came from Jesus. Faith is not a mind that thinks positively of its own strength, but knowing Jesus, who is able to save, and relying on Him. The value and the power of faith lie not in the feelings of the one who believes, but in Jesus Christ, the object of that faith.

We must also clearly distinguish between the experience of receiving bodily healing and the salvation of the everlasting remission of sins. That someone has experienced the healing of a disease does not mean that he has automatically received the remission of all his sins. Conversely, neither is it so that the person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit is always healed of every disease in this world. Bodily healing must be entrusted to the will of God, but the salvation of the remission of sins is given to everyone who believes the completed gospel.

The continuous flow of blood makes us think of the state in which sin keeps coming out of man's heart. A person does not become righteous by correcting only a few wrong behaviors. Because the root of sin is in his heart, he keeps committing sin in thought, word, and deed. With religious rules he may briefly restrain his outward behavior, but he cannot completely remove the sin of the heart.

Jesus came to this earth in the flesh to solve the root of sin. He, who had no sin, took upon His own body all the sins of the people of the world with the baptism He received from John. And carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving all the punishment of sin, and He was buried

and rose again on the third day.

Just as the fountain of the woman's blood was dried up at once by the power of Jesus, Jesus fundamentally solved our problem of sin with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This is not a salvation that reduces sins little by little or washes them anew every day. It is the everlasting salvation He completed by taking on, once and for all, all the sins of the world—those of the past, the present, and the future—and receiving their judgment.

The woman felt the change that had happened in her body, but the assurance of the remission of sins does not rest on bodily feelings or special experiences. Feelings can change with circumstances and the state of the body. The assurance that a sinner has become righteous must rest on the word of God, which testifies that Jesus took on all sins with the baptism He received from John and paid all their price on the Cross.

To believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not vaguely to hope for the salvation of Jesus. It is to accept as fact the word that Jesus took over all my sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, ended the judgment of those sins with the blood of the Cross, and gave everlasting life through the resurrection. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins and testifies that he has become a child of God. The peace of salvation does not come from the thought that I have become perfect enough never to sin again. Even with weakness still remaining, the person who believes the word that Jesus Christ completely solved all sins enjoys peace with God.

Just as the woman told Jesus all the truth of what had

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happened to her, the believer also must not hide his own condition before God. But the act of confessing sins does not itself wash sins away. He must acknowledge his sinfulness and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, who took on all those sins. The power that washes away sin lies not in man's confession but in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished.

This word gives hope also to the person discouraged by long suffering. Even though for twelve years she had gained no effect and her situation had grown worse, the way of coming to Jesus was not closed. That every human method has failed does not mean that the power of Jesus has also come to an end. We must acknowledge our own inability and pray to the Lord, relying on the word.

At the same time, we must not misunderstand prayer and faith as a means that replaces medical treatment. When we are sick, receiving proper examination and treatment while seeking help from God, the Lord of life, does not go against faith. We should entrust the outcome and the timing of healing to the will of God, and in whatever situation we must not doubt His love and His completed salvation.

This section shows that even when many people have gathered near Jesus, those who come to Him in faith may be another matter. True faith is not an outward religious life mingled in the crowd, but acknowledging one's own desperate condition and holding on to the power and the word of Jesus. The Lord knows the person who comes to Him with such faith, and meets him.

The woman with the flow of blood touched the garment of Jesus and was released from her disease, and she heard the word of Jesus and escaped from fear and gained peace. The sinner is released from all his sins by believing the gospel of

the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. Whoever believes this gospel no longer hides in fear of sin and judgment, but comes to live as a child who enjoys peace with God in the Holy Spirit.

Even at the moment when people said that everything was over, Jesus said, *"Do not be afraid; only believe,"* and raised the dead girl

"While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.' And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, 'Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat" (Mark 5:35–43).

While Jesus was speaking to the woman who had suffered from the flow of blood for twelve years, people came from the

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house of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. Jairus had pleaded with Jesus to save his dying daughter, and Jesus was going to his house. But while Jesus was meeting the woman who had suffered from the flow of blood, Jairus's daughter finally died.

To Jairus, the time delayed because of the woman with the flow of blood would have felt very long. Even while watching before his eyes the amazing healing of another person's disease, his heart would have been anxious at the thought that his daughter's life was fading away. To human eyes it looked as though Jesus could have arrived before the daughter died, if He had only hurried a little more.

But for Jesus there was no such thing as being late. For He can not only heal the sick but also raise those who have already died. Jairus had believed that Jesus could cure his daughter's disease, but now he had to believe in Him as the One who rules even over death. The delayed time became not a time that tore down his faith, but a time that led him into deeper faith.

The people who came from the house said, *"Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"* They thought that while the daughter was still alive, Jesus could do something, but that after her death no possibility remained. To them, death was the final boundary that even the power of Jesus could not cross.

This is the conclusion that human experience and reason reach. People can give medicine to a sick person and treat him, but they cannot bring back to life a person whose life has completely departed. So their words were a natural judgment when measured by human ability. But they only thought of Jesus as a teacher who heals diseases; they did not know Him as God, who creates life and raises the dead.

Jesus heard what they said and told Jairus, *"Do not be afraid; only believe."* Jesus was not denying the fact that the

daughter had died, nor telling Jairus to erase his grief by force. He was telling him to trust the power and the word of Jesus more than death, the reality before his eyes.

The faith spoken of here is not self-suggestion, repeating in one's heart that she is not dead. Nor is it the positive thinking that if one strongly imagines the result he desires, it will come true as imagined. True faith is knowing who Jesus is—the One who can raise even the dead—and receiving His word.

That Jesus said *"only believe"* does not mean, either, that the act of faith on Jairus's part would create the power that raises his daughter. The power that raises the dead girl belonged only to Jesus. Faith does not produce power within oneself; it relies on the almighty Jesus and receives what He will do.

To Jairus, two opposing words were heard. The people who came from his house said that his daughter had died and it was now over, and Jesus said not to fear but to believe. Faith is the matter of deciding whose word one will receive into his heart when man's judgment and the word of God collide like this.

Jesus took only Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and went to the house of the ruler of the synagogue. These three disciples would later also witness close at hand the important ministry of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration and in Gethsemane. Jesus set them as witnesses of the event in which the dead girl would come to life.

In the house of the ruler of the synagogue, many people had gathered and were making a commotion, weeping and wailing loudly. The sorrow of the parents and the family who had lost their young daughter was real. The Bible does not make light of sorrow in the face of death, or condemn tears as an act without faith. Parting with a beloved person brings deep pain to everyone.

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But Jesus said to them, *"Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping."* This does not mean that the girl had not actually died and had merely lost consciousness for a while. The people who came from the house and the family clearly knew that the child had died, and Jesus also went in to raise the dead child.

Jesus called her death sleep because before Him the girl's death was not an everlasting end. As one wakes a sleeping person, Jesus would raise the dead girl with His word. To man, death is a despair that cannot be crossed, but to Jesus, the Lord of life, it is a thing that must obey Him.

The people heard the words of Jesus and ridiculed Him. They had certainty about the fact that the girl had died, but they did not know who Jesus was. They believed the death they had confirmed with their eyes, but they did not believe the word of the Lord, who raises the dead. If a person makes his own experience alone the final standard of truth, he can come to ridicule the power and the word of God.

Jesus put all the ridiculing people outside. Then He took only the girl's parents and Peter, James, and John, and entered where the child was. Jesus did not try to display Himself by using the commotion and the unbelief of the people. Before the necessary witnesses, He quietly revealed the power of life.

Jesus took the dead girl by the hand. According to the Law, one who touched a dead body became unclean, but death and uncleanness could not seize Jesus. Rather, the life of Jesus came upon the dead girl. Just as the disease disappeared when the woman with the flow of blood touched His garment, when Jesus took the girl's hand, death withdrew.

Jesus said to the girl, *"Talitha, cumi."* Mark translated and recorded its meaning: *"Little girl, I say to you, arise."* Jesus did not perform any complicated rite or incantation. With His

own word of authority He commanded the dead girl to arise.

In the words *"I say to you"* is contained the absolute authority of Jesus. Jesus did not borrow another's authority or ask some higher being for power. When He, the Lord of life, spoke directly, death obeyed His command. The power of God, who in the beginning created the world by the word, appeared upon this girl.

The girl heard the word of Jesus and immediately arose and walked. Waking from death did not require a long time, nor did she recover her strength gradually. The twelve-year-old girl recovered life so completely that she could rise and walk at once. This shows that Jesus did not merely bring back her consciousness, but returned life to her completely.

Mark records that this girl was twelve years old. The period during which the woman healed just before had suffered from the flow of blood was also twelve years. One person's life had been growing weak with disease for twelve years, and the other lost her life at twelve years of age. Jesus is the One who rules over both the disease that lasts long and the death that comes suddenly.

Those who were there were greatly amazed when they saw the girl come back to life. To them it was something they could not even imagine, but to Jesus it was something He could accomplish with His word. This event testifies that Jesus is not a mere prophet or healer, but the Son of God, who gives life to the dead.

The girl's coming back to life was a revival in which she received again the life of the body in this world. She would afterward grow up and live, and at some time face the death of the body again. Therefore we must not regard this event as entirely identical with the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus did not come back to a body that would die again; He rose again in a

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body that had defeated death forever.

But the girl's revival shows in advance that Jesus holds the authority to raise the dead on the last day. The person who believes in Jesus and has received everlasting life is not forsaken by God even though his body dies. When the Lord comes again, he will rise and live together with Him forever.

Jesus strictly warned them that no one should know of this. This was not so much a command to hide the event forever, as a word to keep the people of that time from looking only at the miracle and misunderstanding Jesus as a political king or a solver of worldly problems. The most important purpose for which Jesus came to this earth was not to show people miracles, but to save sinners from sin and judgment.

Jesus told them to give the girl something to eat. Even after revealing the amazing power that raised the dead, He attentively cared for the girl's practical need. The command to give her food confirms the fact that she had really recovered the life of her body, and shows that the parents were again given the responsibility of caring for their child.

The person who has gained new life spiritually also needs the word he must go on eating. That one has been born again by believing the gospel does not mean that he no longer needs to learn the word of God. The person who has received the remission of sins must keep hearing and learning the word of the Bible, and must grow, supplied with the food of faith within the church.

The figure of Jairus's daughter lying dead makes us think of the spiritual state of man separated from God because of sin. Even a person who is alive and moving in body, if his sin has not been solved, lies under the judgment of God and everlasting death. Just as a dead person cannot rise by his own strength, a sinner cannot give everlasting life to himself with

his own good deeds and religious efforts.

Jesus came to this earth in the flesh to save mankind placed under sin and death. With the baptism He received from John, He took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. And carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and so received all the punishment of sin in our place.

The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist was God's righteous way of salvation, by which He took over all the sins of sinners. The blood of the Cross is the evidence that He paid in full the wages of the sins He had taken on. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, defeating death, the wages of sin, and completing everlasting salvation.

Just as the girl arose at once at the word of Jesus, the sinner receives spiritual life when he believes the word that Jesus removed all his sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Salvation is not a process of escaping death little by little through long-accumulated good deeds. The moment one believes with the heart the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit, he receives the remission of all sins once and for all and is born again of the Spirit.

We must not use the words *"Do not be afraid; only believe"* as a promise that whatever we desire will all come true. The object of faith is not our own wishes or convictions, but Jesus Christ and His word. God hears our prayers, but He accomplishes all things according to His own good will and wisdom.

For the body to be healed of disease and to escape the danger of death is a great grace for which to thank God. But even the life restored in this world one day meets death again. Therefore the greatest salvation a person must receive does not stop at the solving of physical problems; it is to receive the

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remission of all sins and gain everlasting life.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit holds hope even in the face of the death of the body. This does not mean that death is not sad, or that he does not weep even when parting with his family. Believers also grieve when they lose those they love, but because they believe that Jesus rose again and that they too will live again at the Lord's appointed time, they do not fall into everlasting despair.

The faith Jesus asked of Jairus was the faith that holds on to His word while the result is not yet visible. The situation grew worse, from disease to death, but the power of Jesus was not diminished in the least. The believer too, when things flow differently from his expectation, must not conclude that the love of God has disappeared, but must rely on the word.

This section teaches that true faith trusts the word of Jesus more than man's experience or senses. The people said that the girl had died and everything was over, but Jesus said, *"Little girl, I say to you, arise."* When the Lord of life spoke, the girl came to life, beyond every judgment of man.

The sinner must first accept the word of God that he lies under sin and judgment. And he must also believe, just as it is, the word that the Son of God completely solved all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. Whoever believes this gospel escapes from sin and everlasting death, receives the Holy Spirit, and comes to live as a child of God in the hope of the resurrection. ✉

Questions and Answers on Mark Chapter 5

[Question] 1. Set out in order the things Jesus did that are recorded in Mark chapter 5.

Mark chapter 5 records in order how Jesus set free a man who was seized by a demon, healed a woman who had long suffered from a disease, and brought a dead girl back to life. Through these events it is revealed that Jesus is the Son of God, who rules over evil spirits, disease, and even death.

When Jesus arrived at the region of the Gadarenes on the other side of the sea and came out of the boat, a man with an unclean spirit came out from among the tombs and met Him. He was strong enough to pull apart chains and break shackles, so that no one could control him, and night and day he was crying out among the tombs and in the mountains and hurting his own body with stones. Jesus commanded the unclean spirit that had entered him to come out of the man.

When Jesus asked the demon his name, the demon answered, *"My name is Legion; for we are many."* The demons begged Him to send them into the herd of swine nearby, and when Jesus permitted them, they came out of the man and entered the swine. The herd of almost two thousand swine ran down the steep place, fell into the sea, and drowned. This event shows that even the many demons whom no one could control were under the command and the permission of Jesus.

The man who had escaped from the demons was sitting

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beside Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. But the people of that region, even though they saw him made whole, did not believe in Jesus and give thanks; fearing the loss of their swine and the harm that might come to themselves, they begged Jesus to leave their region. When Jesus got into the boat, the healed man wanted to go with Him, but Jesus did not permit this; He told him to return home and tell his relatives the great things the Lord had done for him and the compassion He had bestowed. He went to Decapolis and proclaimed the great things Jesus had done for him, and all the people marveled. Jesus not only made whole the man who had been seized by an evil spirit and hurting his own body, but also raised him up as a person who testifies of the gospel.

When Jesus crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered to Him. Then Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, came to Jesus and fell at His feet. He begged Him earnestly, saying that his little daughter was at the point of death, and asking Jesus to come and lay His hands on her so that the child might be saved and live. Jesus heard his plea and went together with him toward Jairus's house.

On the way to Jairus's house, there was in the crowd a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years. She had suffered many things under many physicians and had spent all her property, but she was no better at all; rather, her disease had grown worse. This woman heard about Jesus and believed, *"If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."* So she came in among the crowd and touched the garment of Jesus, and immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she came to know in her body that she was healed of the disease.

Jesus, knowing that power had gone out of Him, asked who had touched His clothes. The woman, knowing what had

happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before Jesus, and told Him the whole truth. Jesus did not rebuke her but said, *"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."* Jesus not only healed the woman's bodily disease; He Himself confirmed that she had been saved by faith, and He gave her peace.

While Jesus was still speaking to that woman, people came from Jairus's house and reported that his daughter had died. They said that since the child was already dead, there was no need to trouble Jesus any further. But Jesus heard those words and said to Jairus, *"Do not be afraid; only believe."* People saw death as the state in which all hope had ended, but even death could not defy the life and the authority of Jesus.

Jesus took only Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and went to Jairus's house. In the house, people were weeping and wailing loudly. When Jesus said, *"The child is not dead, but sleeping,"* the people ridiculed Him. Jesus put them all outside, and then took the child's parents and the three disciples and entered where the child was.

Jesus took the girl by the hand and said, *"Talitha, cumi."* This means, *"Little girl, I say to you, arise."* Then the twelve-year-old girl immediately arose and walked, and those who saw it were greatly amazed. Jesus strictly warned them that no one should know of this, and told them to give the girl something to eat. Jesus showed not only the power that returns life, but also attentive care for the everyday needs of the girl who had come back to life.

The events recorded in Mark chapter 5 show that Jesus has compassion on those who suffer amid evil spirits, disease, and death, and that He is the Son of God, who rules over evil spirits, disease, and death. The demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes escaped from the power of the evil spirits, the

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woman with the flow of blood was released from the disease that human methods could not solve, and Jairus's daughter came back to life from death. All these events show that Jesus is the Son of God, who rules even over the problems man cannot solve, and that He is the Savior, who gives life and peace to those who believe His word and come to Him.

[Question] 2. What kind of place is the region of the Gadarenes, which appears in verse 1?

The region of the Gadarenes was a region of Gentile culture east of the sea, where Jesus arrived after crossing the Sea of Galilee. When Mark 5:1 says *"the other side of the sea,"* it means that Jesus crossed eastward from the Jewish region of Galilee, where He mainly ministered.

This region was connected with the region of Decapolis, which was strongly influenced by Greek and Roman culture. Decapolis means 'ten cities,' and it was a group of cities formed around the area east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. In the region east of the Sea of Galilee lived not only Jews but also many Gentiles.

The appearance in the passage of a herd of almost two thousand swine also shows that many Gentiles lived here. Since the Jews regarded swine as unclean animals according to the Law, the sight of swine being raised on such a large scale suggests that this region was influenced more by Gentile culture than by the Jewish way of life.

In this place there were also mountains, steep slopes, and caves used as tombs. The record that the demon-possessed man lived among the tombs, and that the herd of swine ran down the steep place toward the sea, fits the terrain east of the Sea of

Galilee. However, since the ancient city of *"Gadara"* lay at a distance from the seashore, *"the country of the Gadarenes"* can be understood as pointing not only to the city itself but to the wide region that lay under the influence of Gadara. The east side of the Sea of Galilee was, on the whole, the cultural sphere of Decapolis, where many Gentiles dwelt.

Seen spiritually, Jesus' going to the region of the Gadarenes shows the fact that His compassion and His saving authority are not confined to the Jewish region. Jesus went in person to the demon-possessed man, whom people could not control and had left abandoned among the tombs, and delivered him from the power of the evil spirits.

It is also important that the healed man went about Decapolis telling the great things Jesus had done for him. Jesus saved one man within the Gentile cultural sphere, and through him He caused the Lord's compassion and power to be passed on to the people of that region. Therefore the region of the Gadarenes is, geographically, the Gentile region east of the Sea of Galilee, and from the standpoint of the gospel, it is a place that shows the salvation and the compassion of Jesus being passed on across the boundaries of nation and region.

[Question] 3. Mark 5:2–5—in what state was the demon-possessed man living?

The demon-possessed man had left the villages and houses where people lived, and was dwelling among the tombs. Seized by an unclean spirit, he could not govern his own thoughts and behavior normally, nor could he keep peaceful relationships with other people.

People tried several times to bind him with shackles and

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chains, but he pulled apart the chains and broke the shackles. In the end, no one had the strength to control him. This shows that human strength and outward restraints could not restore him whole.

Night and day he cried out among the tombs and in the mountains, and he hurt his own body with stones. The demon seemed to give the man extraordinary strength, but in reality it cut him off from people, made him live among the tombs, the place of death, and drove him on to destroy his own body.

So he was in a wretched state in which he could be neither cured nor controlled by any human method. But Jesus did not turn away from him, whom everyone had given up on; He met him in person, cast out the unclean spirit, and restored him as a man in his right mind.

[Question] 4. Mark 5:6–7—what did the demon-possessed man do when he saw Jesus from afar?

When the demon-possessed man saw Jesus from afar, he ran to Him and bowed down before Him. And he cried out with a loud voice, *"What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me."*

Outwardly it looks as though the man himself spoke, but the content was the words of the demon inside him, who recognized Jesus. The demon recognized Jesus exactly as the *"Son of the Most High God,"* and it also knew that it could not escape His command and His judgment.

His running to Jesus and bowing down was not the true worship of faith for receiving salvation; it was the demon's act of surrendering in fear before the absolute authority of Jesus.

This shows that even a man with many demons could not resist the authority of Jesus, and that every evil spirit can only submit before Jesus, the Son of God.

[Question] 5. Mark 5:9—when Jesus asked what his name was, what did the demon answer?

When Jesus asked, *"What is your name?"* the demon answered as follows.

"My name is Legion; for we are many."

"Legion" is an expression that calls to mind a Roman legion, organized in great numbers. It means that not just one demon but many demons had entered the man and were ruling over him. But no matter how many demons were inside him, they could not defy the command of Jesus; they could only surrender before Him and beg.

[Question] 6. According to Mark 5:10, what did the demons beg?

The demons earnestly begged Jesus not to send them out of that region.

This shows that demons are not absolute beings who act as they please, but are under the authority of Jesus. Many demons made up a *"Legion,"* but without the permission of Jesus they could not even decide the place where they would stay.

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[Question] 7. What does the herd of swine in Mark 5:11 show about this region?

The fact that a large herd of swine was being raised near the mountains shows that the region of the Gadarenes was a place where many Gentiles dwelt and which was influenced by Greek and Roman culture.

Because the Jews regarded swine as unclean animals according to the Law, they did not ordinarily eat pork or raise swine on a large scale. Yet in this region there was a herd of almost two thousand swine. This suggests that the place belonged to the cultural sphere of Decapolis, where the life and the economic activity of Gentiles were more active than the Jewish way of life.

This does not mean that no Jews at all lived in that region. But the presence of the herd of swine is an important background showing that the residents and the culture of the place bore, on the whole, a Gentile character.

Jesus' crossing over to this region and saving the demon-possessed man reveals the fact that the Lord's compassion and saving authority are not confined to the Jews, but reach even to Gentile regions and to abandoned people.

[Question] 8. Mark 5:12–13—what did Jesus do about the request to be sent into the swine?

When the unclean spirits begged Jesus to send them into the swine so that they might enter them, Jesus gave them permission.

When Jesus permitted them, the unclean spirits came out of the man and entered the swine. Then the herd of almost two

thousand swine ran violently down the steep place toward the sea, fell in, and drowned.

This event shows that the demons could not enter even the swine without the permission of Jesus, and that every evil spirit lies under His absolute authority. It also reveals the fact that the work of demons does not make a person whole, but in the end leads to destruction and death.

[Question] 9. Mark 5:14–17—what did the people who came out at the news of the drowned herd see, and what did they do?

When those who fed the swine ran to the town and the countryside and told what had happened, the people came out to Jesus to confirm it for themselves.

They saw the man who had been seized by the Legion of demons—who had cried out among the tombs and hurt his own body— now sitting beside Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. Seeing the complete change in the man whom no one had been able to control, the people were afraid.

Those who had seen it in person told them in detail how the demon-possessed man had been made whole and how the herd of swine had drowned. But rather than rejoicing that one man had escaped the power of the demons and been made whole, and believing in Jesus, the people of that region begged Jesus to leave their territory.

They witnessed the authority of Jesus, but they were seized by the fear that if they received the Lord, some further loss might come to their property and their livelihood. It was an attitude that counted the herd of swine and material gain more precious than the salvation of one soul.

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This event gives the lesson that merely being astonished at the power of God does not amount to true faith. If a person does not accept the word and the salvation of Jesus and loves his own wealth and desires more, he can commit the wrong of asking the Savior to leave, even though the Savior has come near.

[Question] 10. Mark 5:18—what does the plea of the man who had been demon-possessed, that he might be with Jesus, show?

The plea of the man who had been demon-possessed, that he might be with Jesus, shows that he was thankful to Jesus, who had saved him from his wretched state, and that he now wanted to follow the Lord without leaving His side.

He had once been ruled by many demons, living among the tombs and hurting his own body, but after he met Jesus he became a man clothed and in his right mind. Because he knew the fact that Jesus had delivered him from the power of the evil spirits, from which neither his own strength nor people's methods could free him, he wanted to be with the One who had saved him.

In this plea were contained not only thanksgiving and love toward Jesus, but also the heart that did not want to return to its former wretched state, and that wanted to live within the Lord's protection and teaching. The person who has truly received the Lord's grace comes to want to draw near to the Lord who saved him and to follow Him, rather than to long for his former life.

But following Jesus does not necessarily mean only staying at His side in the body. Jesus did not grant his request as it was;

He gave him a different mission—to return home and tell his relatives the compassion he had received.

Therefore his plea shows the thankful and believing heart of a saved person, who wants to be with the Lord and follow Him. And the command of Jesus that follows teaches the fact that such a heart must appear as the obedience of passing on the grace one has received to other people.

[Question] 11. Mark 5:19—what did Jesus command the man who had been demon-possessed?

Although the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go together with Him, Jesus did not permit it, but commanded him as follows.

"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

Jesus had him return to his family and relatives, who knew him well, instead of following Him about to distant places, and had him tell them the compassion and the grace of salvation he had received. For his own restored self was a clear evidence that showed the power of Jesus.

This gives the lesson that a saved person must first tell the people close to him the great things the Lord has done for him. Testifying of the gospel is not boasting of one's own merit or of one's past sins; it is making known how the Lord had compassion on him and saved him when he was in a wretched state.

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[Question] 12. Mark 5:20—what did the man who had been demon-possessed do when he heard the words of Jesus?

The man who had been demon-possessed obeyed the words of Jesus, left that place, and went to Decapolis. And he proclaimed to the people how great things Jesus had done for him.

He testified that his escape from the power of the demons and his becoming whole in mind had come about not by his own effort or by people's help, but by the compassion and the power Jesus had bestowed. All the people who saw his changed self and heard his testimony marveled.

He had wanted to go with Jesus in the body, but he returned to the place the Lord had assigned and obeyed His word. This shows that being with the Lord is not only staying in the place one desires, but carrying out the entrusted mission in the place to which the Lord has sent us.

Moreover, this man did not stop at telling only his close relatives, but made it known widely through the several regions of Decapolis. This shows the fact that a saved person must become a witness of the gospel, who passes on to other people the great things the Lord has done for him.

[Question] 13. Mark 5:21–23—who was Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, and for what did he come to Jesus?

Jairus was one of the rulers of the synagogue, who took charge of the synagogue of the Jews and managed its worship and its order. A ruler of the synagogue was a leader known to

the people, and a man who held considerable responsibility and standing within the community.

But when his little daughter came to the point of death, Jairus realized the fact that he could not save the child by his own position or ability. Knowing that Jesus was by the sea, he came to Him and fell at His feet in front of many people. It was an attitude that did not put forward his social standing and his dignity, but lowered himself with the heart that Jesus alone could save his daughter.

Jairus begged Jesus earnestly, saying, *"My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."* The purpose for which he came to Jesus was to bring Him to his house, have Him lay His hands on his dying daughter, and have the child saved from her disease and live.

The record that Jairus *"begged Him earnestly, saying"* shows that he did not make one formal request and withdraw, but kept on asking Jesus for help with the desperate heart of one who longed to save his daughter. With the faith that Jesus had the power to heal the sick and to save life, he sincerely pleaded with Him not to turn away from his daughter but to go together with him.

His plea did not become a merit or a price that bought the answer. That he begged much does not mean that he moved Jesus by the number of his words or the intensity of his emotion; it reveals the heart that acknowledged his own inability and relied only on the compassion and the authority of Jesus. True prayer is not speaking formally while keeping one's dignity; it is acknowledging that one absolutely needs the Lord's help, and laying one's situation before Him in faith.

Jesus heard Jairus's plea and went together with him. This event gives the lesson that when we meet a problem we cannot

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solve with our own strength, we must not lose heart or rely only on human methods, but must humble ourselves, come to the Lord, and seek His help in faith.

[Question] 14. How do Mark 5:25 and 26 describe the situation of the woman who suffered from the flow of blood?

This woman had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years. Through the long years of a disease in which the bleeding did not stop, she went through physical suffering and weakness, and she was in a desperate situation in which it was hard to live a normal life.

To be cured of her disease she went to many physicians, but she rather suffered many things. She used all the property she had for treatment, but she gained no effect at all; far from being healed, the disease grew even worse.

So this woman not only suffered in body from the long disease, but also lost all her property in seeking a cure, and she was in a state in which it was hard to find hope any longer by human methods. At just such a time she heard the news about Jesus, and she came to Him, placing in Him her last and true hope of healing.

[Question] 15. Mark 5:25–34—what lessons does the healing of the woman who had suffered from the flow of blood give us?

The event in which the woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years was healed teaches us that Jesus

can solve even the problems that could not be solved by human methods, and that true faith is acknowledging one's own inability and coming to Jesus, relying on His power and His word.

This woman kept losing blood for twelve years and suffered physically. She went about to many physicians, suffered many things, and used all the property she had, but she gained no effect. Rather, her disease grew worse than before. This shows that the woman used every method she could to cure her disease, but in the end reached the state in which she could not solve the problem with her own strength and property.

Yet this event does not mean that it is wrong to go to a doctor or receive medical treatment when we fall ill. God can also heal diseases through medicine and remedies. The passage does not deny all medicine; it shows, in contrast, the woman's desperate situation, which no method of that day could cure, and the special authority of Jesus.

In this situation the woman heard the news about Jesus. She believed that Jesus was One who could heal the sick, and with the heart that said, *"If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well,"* she went in among the crowd and touched the garment of Jesus. This faith was not a superstition that thought the clothes themselves held mysterious power; it was the faith that believed the fact that Jesus had the power to heal her, and so came to Him.

At that time many people were surrounding Jesus and pressing in, so in the body many people came in contact with Jesus' person and His clothes. But among them, the one who touched Jesus in faith was this woman. This shows that simply being near Jesus or taking part in religious gatherings is not enough. One must hear the word about Jesus, and believe with the heart that He is the One who saves him.

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When the woman touched the garment of Jesus, the fountain of her blood was dried up at once, and she realized in her body that her disease was healed. Jesus, knowing that power had gone out of Him, asked, *"Who touched My clothes?"* He did not ask because He did not know this; we may see contained in His question the intent to have the hidden woman come out before the Lord, make known what had happened to her, and receive clear confirmation of the grace she had received by faith.

The woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before Jesus, and told Him everything as it was. She did not secretly receive only the healing and leave; before Jesus she confessed truthfully what her situation had been and how she had touched Him in faith and been healed. This gives the lesson that the person who has received the Lord's grace must not hide what He has done for him, but must testify of it truthfully.

Jesus did not rebuke the woman, but said, *"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."* His calling her *"daughter"* shows that He did not merely heal her bodily disease; He warmly received the woman who was trembling in fear, and gave her peace. The woman had felt in her body that the disease was healed, but through the word of Jesus she received confirmation that her healing was certain.

The words *"your faith has made you well"* do not mean that the woman's faith itself held the power to heal the disease. The power that healed her was with Jesus, and her faith was the channel that led her to come to Him, relying on that power. So true faith is not relying on the size of one's faith or the intensity of one's feelings; it is knowing who Jesus is and what He has done, and relying on Him.

We can apply this event to the spiritual problem of sin as well. But what the passage directly records is the healing of an actual flow of blood, and we must not conclude that the flow of blood itself arose because of the woman's personal sins. Applying the flow of blood to the problem of sin is a spiritual parable and lesson, which understands the salvation of the soul through a disease of the body.

Just as the flow of blood continued for a long time and drained the woman's life, man is born with sin, keeps committing sin, and in the end comes to the judgment of sin. With good deeds and asceticism, with wealth and man-made religion, no one can fundamentally remove the sin of the heart. The more a person tries to solve his sins by his own efforts, the deeper his fear of sin and his condemnation may only grow. Therefore man must acknowledge that he cannot remove his own sin, and must believe in Jesus Christ, who completely solved the problem of sin with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and died, and rose again from the dead. Just as the fountain of the blood was dried up, all the sins of the person who believes this gospel are fundamentally removed once and for all. A person does not wash away his sins little by little with his own deeds; by believing with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished, he receives the remission of sins, becomes righteous, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The event of the woman's healing is not a promise that every disease of the body will always be healed immediately if only one has faith. God may heal a disease, may use the course of treatment and medicine, or may give the faith and the grace

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to endure in the midst of disease. Therefore we must not judge a person whose disease is not healed as having no faith. But in whatever situation, we should pray to the Lord and seek His help, believing that the sovereignty of life and salvation belongs to Jesus.

In the end, this event teaches the fact that even where human methods have ended, hope toward Jesus has not ended. A person must acknowledge his own inability, hear the word of Jesus, and believe with the heart what He has done. Whoever comes to the Lord with such faith receives the remission of sins and everlasting life, and enjoys the true peace the Lord gives.

[Question] 16. Mark 5:27—why did the woman who suffered from the flow of blood come to Jesus?

The woman who suffered from the flow of blood came to Jesus because she had heard the news about Him. She believed that Jesus had healed many sick people, and that He had the power to heal even the disease she had suffered from for so long.

For twelve years this woman had gone about to many physicians and used up all her property, but she gained no effect, and her disease only grew worse. When she could no longer find hope in human methods, she believed that Jesus alone could heal her, and she mingled in the crowd and came to Him.

She touched the garment of Jesus from behind, holding the faith that she would be saved if she only touched His clothes. So the reason she came to Jesus was not simply to see Him out of curiosity; it was to believe that Jesus had the power to save her from her disease, and to receive healing.

[Question] 17. Mark 5:28—why did the woman try to touch even just the hem of His garment?

The woman tried to touch the garment of Jesus because she believed, *"If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."*

For twelve years she had been treated by many physicians and had used all she had, but she gained no effect. After she heard the news about Jesus, however, she believed that He had the power to heal her, and that even if she could not speak to Him at length in person, she would be released from her disease if she only touched His clothes.

Her trying to touch His garment was not because she believed that the garment itself held mysterious power. What she relied on was not the clothes but Jesus. The act of touching the hem of His garment was the expression of the faith that believed the power of Jesus and came to Him.

In the woman's not stepping out before the many people but quietly touching Him from behind, there may have been the fear and the shame that came from the disease she had suffered so long. But the most important reason, which verse 28 itself makes plain, is that she believed she would be saved if she only touched the clothes of Jesus.

[Question] 18. Mark 5:29—what happened to the woman when she touched His garment?

When the woman touched the garment of Jesus, the fountain of her blood was dried up at once. She realized immediately in her own body that she was healed of the disease she had suffered from for so long.

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The disease that no treatment had been able to cure for twelve years was healed at once by the power of Jesus. This shows that the woman did not simply come into contact with Jesus in the crowd; she touched Him believing that He had the authority to heal her, and Jesus healed her with His own power.

[Question] 19. Mark 5:30—knowing that the power had gone out of Him, what did Jesus ask?

Jesus, knowing that His power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and asked as follows.

"Who touched My clothes?"

Jesus did not ask because He did not know who had touched Him. We may understand that He asked with the intent that the woman who had touched Him in faith would come forward, make known what had happened to her, and hear directly from the Lord the words of salvation and peace.

[Question] 20. Mark 5:31—what did the disciples answer when Jesus asked?

The disciples answered Jesus as follows.

"You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

Because many people were surrounding Jesus and pressing in on Him, the disciples could not understand His asking who had touched Him. They saw only the bodily contact of the many who came against Jesus, but Jesus knew the woman who had touched His clothes in faith and received His power.

[Question] 21. Mark 5:32–33—what did the woman do when Jesus looked around?

When Jesus looked around to find the person who had touched His garment, the woman, knowing what had happened to her, feared and trembled.

She no longer hid in the crowd, but came out before Jesus and fell down in front of Him. And she told Him all the truth: that she had suffered from the flow of blood for a long time, and that after touching His garment her disease had been healed.

The woman's conduct shows the figure of a person who has received the grace of Jesus not hiding what has happened to her, but confessing it truthfully before the Lord. Jesus did not seek her out in order to rebuke her; He had her come forward in order to confirm openly the salvation she had received, and to give her peace instead of fear.

[Question] 22. Mark 5:34—what do the words *"your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction"* mean?

These words mean that the woman who had suffered from the flow of blood believed in the power of Jesus and came to Him, and that through that faith she was completely released from her disease and received salvation and peace.

Jesus first called the woman *"Daughter."* This shows that He did not rebuke her as one who had secretly touched His clothes, but received her with love and compassion. To the woman who had long suffered from disease and was trembling in fear, Jesus gave a warm relationship and comfort.

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The words *"your faith has made you well"* do not mean that the woman's faith itself held the power to heal the disease. The power that healed the disease was with Jesus. The woman's faith was the channel that acknowledged the fact that Jesus had the authority to heal her, and led her to come to Him. Therefore faith is not relying on self-conviction or on the intensity of feeling; it is relying on Jesus, who holds power and compassion.

Many people pressed around Jesus and came in contact with His person and His clothes, but this woman touched Him believing, *"If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."* This shows that being bodily near Jesus and believing in Him with the heart are different. Taking part in religious gatherings and holding knowledge about Jesus is not enough; one must believe with the heart that He is the One who saves him.

The words *"Go in peace"* mean that the woman no longer needed to fear because of having secretly touched Him, or to worry that her disease might come back. She had realized in her body that the disease was healed, but Jesus confirmed that fact for her with His own word. The woman could return in peace, resting not only on her own feelings but on the unchanging word of Jesus.

The words *"be healed of your affliction"* mean that the woman was completely freed from the suffering and the bondage of the flow of blood. Jesus did not merely stop the symptoms for a while; He dried up the fountain of the blood and healed her wholly, so that she could live a healthy life.

We can apply this event to the problem of the remission of sins as well. Just as the source of the flow of blood was not cured by human methods, the sin of man cannot be fundamentally removed by good deeds, asceticism, or religious

effort. Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and died, and rose again from the dead. When we believe this gospel of salvation, all sins are removed once and for all, and we are released from the condemnation of sin and come to enjoy true peace with God.

But we must not interpret these words as a general promise that for the person who has faith, every disease of the body will surely be healed at once. The passage records an actual event of healing that Jesus performed for this woman. Neither must we judge a person whose disease is not healed as one without faith. God may heal a disease directly, may use medicine and the course of treatment, or may give the grace to endure in the midst of disease.

In the end, these words mean that the Lord gave complete salvation, assurance, and peace to the woman who believed His power and His compassion and came to Him. A person must believe not in his own merit or in the size of his faith, but in Jesus, who saves him, and in the word He has accomplished.

[Question] 23. Mark 5:35—what did the people who came from the house of the ruler of the synagogue report?

The people who came from the house of the ruler of the synagogue reported to Jairus as follows.

"Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

They thought that since Jairus's daughter had already died, there was nothing more that could be done even if Jesus were brought to the house. By man's judgment, death was the end of

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all hope, so they said that he should now stop seeking help from Jesus.

But Jesus heard their words and said to Jairus, *"Do not be afraid; only believe."* People gave up in the face of death, but Jesus held the authority of life, which raises even the dead again.

[Question] 24. Mark 5:36—when Jesus heard the news that the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue had died, what did He say to him?

To Jairus the ruler of the synagogue, who had heard the news of his daughter's death, Jesus spoke as follows.

"Do not be afraid; only believe."

The people who came from the house said that since the daughter had already died, there was no longer any need to seek help from Jesus. But Jesus told him not to look at people's despairing words and at the death before his eyes, but to believe the authority and the word of the Lord, who can raise even the dead.

[Question] 25. According to Mark 5:37, who were the three men who followed Jesus?

The three men who followed Jesus to the house of the ruler of the synagogue were Peter, James, and John the brother of James.

Jesus permitted no one to follow Him except these three disciples. They came to witness close at hand the event in which Jesus raised Jairus's daughter from death.

[Question] 26. Mark 5:38–39—what do the words spoken to those gathered at the house of the ruler of the synagogue, that the child is *"not dead, but sleeping,"* mean?

When Jesus said, *"The child is not dead, but sleeping,"* it does not mean that Jairus's daughter had not really died, or that she had merely lost consciousness. The people who came from the house had plainly reported that the child was dead, and those gathered in the house had also confirmed the child's death and were weeping and wailing loudly.

Jesus described the death as 'sleep' because that child's death was not an everlasting end before Him. As a person wakes someone who is sleeping, Jesus raised the dead child again with a single word. Because Jesus knew that He would soon bring the girl back to life, He called that death sleep.

The people gathered in the house saw death as a final end that could not be reversed, and so, hearing the words of Jesus, they ridiculed Him. But even death could not defy the life and the authority of Jesus. Jesus is the Lord of life, and He holds the authority to give life to the dead and raise them again.

These words do not mean that the death of the body does not exist, or that it is wrong to feel sorrow. The death of a beloved person brings real parting and grief. But to the person who believes in Jesus and has received the remission of sins and eternal life, the death of the body is not a despair in which everything ends; these words give the hope that it is like a sleep that awaits the resurrection on the last day.

Yet this does not mean that every person who dies is automatically saved. Jesus holds the authority to raise the dead again, and to the righteous, who have believed the gospel and received the remission of sins, He promises the resurrection of

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life and the everlasting kingdom. For the person who refuses salvation to the end, there is judgment after death.

Therefore the words *"not dead, but sleeping"* mean that before the life and the authority of Jesus, the death of Jairus's daughter was a temporary state like sleep, and that the Lord would soon raise the child up as if waking her from sleep. These words give the lesson that even when, by man's judgment, all hope seems to have ended, we must believe the word and the authority of Jesus, who overcomes death.

[Question] 27. Mark 5:40—what does the attitude of those who ridiculed Jesus reveal?

The people's ridiculing of Jesus reveals that they judged only by the reality before their eyes and by human experience, and so could not believe the fact that Jesus held the authority to raise the dead.

They knew that Jairus's daughter had really died. So when Jesus said, *"The child is not dead, but sleeping,"* they mocked those words, thinking how a child already dead could be raised again. To them, death was an end that man could never reverse, and they judged that even Jesus could not cross that limit.

Such an attitude shows that although they may have thought of Jesus as an able teacher or as a man who heals diseases, they did not know that He is the Lord of life, the Son of God, who raises the dead. They believed the death they had confirmed with their own eyes, but they did not believe the word Jesus had spoken.

Jesus put all the ridiculing people outside, and then took only the child's parents and the three disciples into the place where the child was. This shows that the unbelief which judges

the word of God by its own experience and ridicules it, and the faith which believes the Lord's word beyond man's thought, are different from each other.

This event gives the lesson that we too must not treat the word of God lightly or ridicule it on the ground that it does not fit our knowledge and experience. Even what is impossible for man is not impossible for Jesus, the Creator. Faith is not denying reality; it is acknowledging the authority and the word of the Lord, who is greater than reality.

In the end, the people's ridicule reveals the unbelief that did not know the true identity and the power of Jesus. Jesus, on the other hand, actually accomplished what they had concluded to be impossible, and so showed that His word is true and that He holds the authority that rules even over death.

[Question] 28. Mark 5:41—taking the child by the hand, what did Jesus say?

Taking the child by the hand, Jesus spoke as follows.

"Talitha, cumi."

The Gospel of Mark explains that these words mean, *"Little girl, I say to you, arise."*

"Talitha, cumi" is Aramaic, the language Jesus used in those days, spoken directly to the girl. When Jesus spoke, the girl who had been dead arose at once. This shows that in the word of Jesus there are the life and the authority that raise even the dead.

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[Question] 29. Mark 5:43—after raising the girl, what did Jesus say?

After raising the girl, Jesus strictly warned them that no one should know of this. And He told them to give the girl something to eat.

In Jesus' telling them not to make this known, we may see contained His intent that people should not crowd to Him only for miracles and so miss the word of the kingdom of God that He proclaimed and His will of salvation.

And His telling them to give the girl something to eat shows that she had really recovered life and could now live a normal life. Jesus not only worked the great power of raising the girl from death, but also cared attentively even for the food the child, now alive again, needed. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

A worthless man sunk in desire, cursed and doomed to destruction, is saved

< Mark 5:1-20 >

"Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.' For He said to him, 'Come out of the man, unclean spirit!' Then He asked him, 'What is your name?' And he answered, saying, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.' Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, 'Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.' And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine

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(there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.' And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled."

The demon-possessed man of Gadara is our own image today

The passage tells how a man with an unclean spirit met Jesus and was healed, and how, receiving the command to tell his relatives the great things the Lord had done for him, he came to preach the gospel. When Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes on the other side of the sea and came out of the boat, immediately a man with an unclean spirit came out from among the tombs and met Him.

This man had his dwelling among the tombs, and though he had often been bound with shackles and chains, he had pulled apart the chains and broken the shackles, so that now no one

could control him. Night and day, among the tombs and in the mountains, he was always crying out and hurting his own body with stones. The Lord met such a man. Jesus met the demon-possessed man, drove out the demons inside him, and let him live with his mind made fully whole. If we look at this passage only by its outward appearance, it is the story of one man being healed; but through this event God is speaking the truth that our souls absolutely need.

This demon-possessed man in the region of the Gadarenes was a man who struck his own body with stones among the tombs and shrieked. Being possessed by demons, he tormented a great many people. So people tried to keep him bound with chains, but each time he broke the chains and came out, and now nothing whatever could control him.

Then who, practically speaking, is this demon-possessed man today? The point is that all mankind in the whole world today is exactly like this man. Everyone is ruled by evil spirits and suffers torment. Because everyone is possessed by demons, people do evil deeds, and while living in this world they are also bound in the frames of many religions.

But no religious frame of this world can drive out the demon inside a person, nor can it make a person whole so that the demon no longer rages. When the Scripture says, *"neither could anyone tame him" (Mark 5:4),* it is speaking precisely of the condition of every person before receiving the remission of sins.

When Jesus told the demon inside this man to come out, the demon begged Him not to torment him, and then begged Him for permission to enter the swine over there. When Jesus permitted it, the countless demons that had been in the man came out and entered the herd of swine, and the herd of almost two thousand swine ran down the steep place toward the sea and drowned. And the man who had been demon-possessed became

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whole. This man is telling us about ourselves.

Every person is born with sin in his heart from birth. So his heart is full of greed like a pig's, and in the end, eating and drinking, he enters the way of destruction. Even while meeting destruction, as the herd of swine went into the sea water and drowned, his greed still remains. His heart is full of greed, so he sets his mind only on the desires of the flesh and lives clinging only to them, trying to obtain them. Living like that under the rule of evil spirits, and finally meeting destruction because of his own sins—this, it says, is our human life.

The Lord met the demon-possessed man living in the region of the Gadarenes, and in practical terms, my life and yours are exactly like this. From birth we are led by the desires of the flesh and live continually chasing our desires. Possessed by demons, we do vain things, submit to and serve futile things, believe in many religions, and cannot escape from continuing greed and the rule of evil spirits. Living like that and then meeting destruction, as the herd of swine went into the sea water and drowned—that is human life; that is man.

It is so with everyone in the whole world. From birth a person lives a desolate life, with only his selfishness growing as he tries only to fill his own greed. He lives as if crazed, holding only the desires of the flesh; and because he is under the rule of demons, though he knows God he does not glorify Him, but opposes God, refuses the love of God, and lives trusting his own greed. Living like that, people die in old age, die young, and die of sickness. Then where do they go when they die? Like the herd of swine that drowned, they enter the everlasting curse, the fire of hell.

The Lord came to save such lives with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

This is human life, and to save such lives our Lord came to this earth. The Lord met such people and cast out the demons inside them. God bestowed great salvation and great mercy on such lives, and with His great love He delivered them from all sins, from destruction, and from evil spirits. The Lord came to this earth in human flesh; He was baptized by John and so took over and bore our sins; carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died; and He rose from the dead, and so saved us from all sins and gave us everlasting life. By believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we who were like the demon-possessed man have received salvation and become whole. And as children of God we live holding faith, and then enter the everlasting kingdom of heaven.

What kind of people are we at the root? What kind of people are those who do not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit? The point is that they are exactly like the demon-possessed man. The demon stirs up greed, and man lives on indulging his greed just as the demon leads him. Yet however much greed he indulges, he does not even come to possess much; he simply lives a life that chases only the desires of the flesh. And so he can neither live as a true human being nor become rich, and in the end he meets destruction and receives the curse.

A person must know his own end. If he does not know his own end and only follows his boiling greed, in the end he dies wretchedly and goes to hell. Therefore he must know that fact in advance, know that he himself can only go to hell, and seek and meet Jesus Christ. Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth to save us from sin, to deliver us from everlasting destruction and judgment, and to give us everlasting blessing. And Jesus was

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baptized by John the Baptist, died nailed to the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us. Everyone must believe this fact. This is the mercy of God. The One who pitied those who would go to hell and came to meet such people is Jesus Christ, who is God. That Lord has saved you and me with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He has become our Savior. This is the love of God.

We must know that we ourselves were such people. I too was such a one, and you yourselves must know that you were such people. Some philosophers say that everything is vanity. To know that much is philosophy. But the one who knows his own self and knows the end of human life, and who goes further to know God and to know the love of God and to come out before God, is the wise one; and such a one receives the love of God.

The Scripture says of this man who had been possessed by the unclean spirit that he *"had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones" (Mark 5:3–5).* A person hurts his own body because of what he has trusted. If he trusted money, he receives wounds because of money; if he believed a religion, or trusted himself, or trusted his own skill, he receives wounds because of that. In the end he hurts his own body by himself; by his own doing he kills himself.

The point is that this is what you and I were at the root. We were the demon-possessed; we were the ones shrieking among the tombs and in the mountains; we were the ones striking our bodies with stones, stripping off our clothes and abusing ourselves; and the ones who would live like that and go to hell

were precisely you and me. We must know this fact, receive it into our hearts, and believe it.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a mere doctrine

We must not think of the gospel of the water and the Spirit as merely one among many Christian doctrines. Just as the Lord actually came to meet the demon-possessed man and told the demon inside him to go out, so our Lord actually is the Savior, who came to save us from evil spirits, from the curse of Satan, from destruction, and from sin. That is why we call Him Jesus, that is, the Savior. Sometimes there are people who have come into the church and yet do not believe the word; such people are so because they do not know themselves. Who is the demon-possessed man? It means you and me before we received the remission of sins.

Therefore we must have even our young children hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit again, so that they come to know that they themselves were the demon-possessed. The one who went about naked, shrieking in the mountains, striking his own body with stones and bleeding, raving mad—that one was one's own self. Is not everyone like this who has not received the remission of sins, who does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Somewhere or other, they are going about out of their minds. That was exactly our own image.

Am I, who preach the gospel, any exception? I too was like that in the old days. In those days no one could control me in my reckless bravado, and I lived running wild. If I had not been possessed by demons, would I have done such things? When a little honor or money seems within reach, people rush at it with

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their lives on the line. Could they do that unless they were out of their minds? Not even knowing that their own bodies are being ruined, they madly chase their own honor and their own greed, doing crazy things, and living like that they go to hell—that is human life; that is man.

A person must know his own original self. The Scripture says, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)*, and, *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19)*. It also says, *"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)*. We must know the love of God. We must know the fact that God pitied you and me and saved us. We must not regard ourselves as something fine.

Even a young child, if he has not been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is like a demon-possessed person. Look back at your own self. Are you living now like a true human being? Are you not staking your life on useless things, receiving wounds from useless things, and abusing yourself with them? Yet God loved us, came to save us, and saved us. Jesus was baptized by John and so took over and bore our sins, was nailed to the Cross in our place and shed His blood and died, and rose from the dead, and so saved us.

Is that a small thing? Is it not a great love? Could you shed your own blood for someone else? Could you give away everything you have for another? God the Father clothed His Son in flesh and sent Him to this earth, and gave the flesh and blood of that Son, and so saved us. Is that a love to be treated lightly and thrown away? Is that not true salvation? The person who hears and knows this fact and still cannot believe is one who does not know that he is even now a demon-possessed man. Not

knowing that he is one heading for destruction, not knowing his own self, he does not believe. Because he has done nothing bad to others, he thinks he is still a good person—he considers himself all right.

But what goodness is there in man? He is one who, if he suffers only a little loss, would even commit murder in his heart. Young people are the same. Even while professing to believe the gospel, they hate it when they are given even a little of God's work to do. The Lord has saved us who are, quite literally, good for nothing. Left to himself, a person goes down the road of the curse. Following the desires of the flesh, carrying a bucket of dung at his side and continually scattering dung in every direction as he lives—that is man. Man has the value of his life because he resembles the image of God, not because of his own thoughts or character or ways of thinking or skills or abilities.

To kneel before material things—that is human life. A base thing that kneels before its own greed, and kneels before anyone a little stronger than itself—that is human life. Who were we originally? The demon-possessed. The Lord loved us—useless, wretched, and worthless as we were—and to save us from destruction and the curse He came to this earth and saved us. The one who knows his own self does the Lord's work and follows the Lord, and never feels it the least bit a loss.

The one who does not know himself comes to think, 'My life is my own—if I live like this, am I not ruining my own life?' But if he knows how worthless a being he really is, he is rather thankful that God uses him in His work, and thankful even for this alone, that God protects him from what is evil.

What is there, really, in going out into the world and living? Working yourself to death only to barely feed your own mouth; when illness once strikes, handing over to the hospital all you have earned; and after being stripped of this and that, nothing

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remains but a wretched and base life. This is not to say that you alone are worthless—every person is worthless like that. I am the same. Yet worthless as we are, God saved me and saved you; so we are thankful and thankful again. And because He entrusts us with right work, lets us do blessed work, and blesses us in body and spirit, we serve the Lord with thanksgiving.

But the one who thinks he is all right harbors an unwilling heart when he is given God's work to do. If he knows how worthless he is, however, he is thankful just to be used, and thankful that He has saved him. How worthless were the ones our Lord came to save, and did save! He came to save those who were like the demon-possessed man. That is why we are thankful.

He entrusted the preaching of the gospel to the one who had been healed

The man who had been demon-possessed was healed. The people of the town came and saw him sitting there with his mind made whole. The man who had been raving only a moment before was sitting calmly and even speaking. When Jesus was about to board the boat and go to another region, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to be with Him. Then Jesus told him not to follow, but said, *"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."* He told him to preach the gospel, to do the work of serving the gospel. We must know our own selves, know God, know also the love of God, and know as well the work God has entrusted to us. Whether what God gives us is more, or what we offer to God is more; whether we are those who must receive God's help, or those who must do something for Him—this we must first discern, and so live.

Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now, and make that salvation your own

The state of the heart of those who still do not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is like that of the demon-possessed man. Being such a person, if he still does not receive into his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the great salvation of God, and is not even thankful, he must come to his senses. The demon in his heart, that greed, is refusing Jesus and refusing those who believe in Jesus. Then in the end, like the herd of swine that rushed out and went into the sea water, he comes to destruction.

The sea water speaks of the world. It means going into the world and going to hell together with the people of the world. It says the herd of swine numbered about two thousand. Countless people are born into this world and die, and they all go to hell. But God so loved this world that He came to save those many pitiable people, and He has saved them.

The Lord was baptized by John and so took over and bore your sins and mine; carrying those sins He was nailed to the Cross and died for us; and He rose from the dead and saved us. The Lord took away our sins, bore our sins, received in our place the judgment for our sins, and rose from the dead, and so saved us. Did He do so, or did He not? We must believe that He did so. How must we believe? We must know our own selves, know the Lord's love, know the great salvation the Lord has given, and so believe. Only then are we not killed, not destroyed, and kept from going to hell. And on this earth we live as children of God, doing the work of righteousness, receiving from God help and blessing in body and spirit, and then enter the everlasting kingdom of God and live forever.

One may be able to know the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit and be able to believe it, yet if he believes without knowing his own root, that faith is vain. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is right; but because he believed without knowing that he himself was one who had to receive that salvation, without knowing that he was one who had to receive the benefit of that salvation, in the end he himself is not included in that salvation. That is why the Lord said, *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Mark 2:17)*. If a person does not know himself, he goes into the sea water and drowns. Therefore we must know ourselves. Knowing that we are those who would meet destruction and suffer torment in the never-quenched fire of hell, we must believe in the Savior, the Deliverer, who came to save us with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then does that salvation become one's own.

Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit at this hour. You must not regard yourself as a decent person; you must acknowledge that you are a sinner who must receive salvation. The figure of the demon-possessed man going about naked among the tombs and in the mountains, shrieking and hurting his own body with stones—that is the original figure of you and me. The Lord pitied such a one and bestowed great salvation on such a one. With the gospel of the water and the Spirit the Lord removed these sins of ours, saved us and made us children of God, and gave us the everlasting kingdom of God. He delivered us from sin and delivered us from destruction. This is the salvation God has given us, and this is the love of God. This you must believe. Believe, and believe again.

After receiving salvation, we must live following the Lord

And we must count it a thing to be thankful for that the Lord has told us to live the life of faith. Even after receiving the remission of sins, if a person does not live by faith and does not follow the Lord, seven demons more wicked than the first come to him, and more greed comes in, so that he suffers greater torment and meets destruction.

It is so with everyone in the whole world. Truly we give thanks before God. To our Lord, who came to save and did save us—who were hopelessly possessed by demons, chasing only the desires of our own flesh, fit only to be cursed and destroyed—we give true thanks and praise. Without the Lord we are nothing. If a person is born into this earth and does not meet the Lord, his whole life is nothing. That life has no fulfillment; he receives wounds because of what he trusted, and dies. In the end, because of himself he dies, is cursed, and goes to hell. So the Lord came as our Savior, pitied us and bestowed great mercy on us, and saved us who, if left alone, would have gone to hell. Believe this fact. Confess that you believe, examine your heart, and when you hear the word, receive it into your heart and believe.

People all over the world, and even those who are now in the church of God—if they do not truly know and believe this, they should know that not many opportunities remain. Do you think the church of God will be on this earth forever? Do you think the servants of God you are meeting will live and stand before you forever? You must believe with your heart the will and the word of God delivered now through the servants of God. Now is the day of salvation. Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now. Do not put it off until later. If in your heart you think, ‘I

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am not a worthless one but rather a decent one, and yet I have received salvation,' you must turn and look your own self straight in the face. And you must acknowledge that you were one possessed by demons. All of us are, at the root, seed of evildoers, those who all life long, possessed by demons, follow only their own greed and then enter destruction. We are those who have not so much as a speck of anything deserving blessing before God. That is why God pitied us so very much, came to save us, and saved us. That is why we believe, why we serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and why we give thanks before God.

Is there anything fine about man? Neither you nor I have anything fine about us. If we compare among ourselves there may be some differences, but that too is like acorns measuring their height against each other. Compared before God, there is nothing fine about us at all. We were born into this earth without wanting it, and without wanting it we were those who had to go to hell. Every person is born carrying the curse from birth.

That is why we cannot but meet the Lord. If we do not meet Him, it is destruction. Should a person born this way fail to believe in the Lord? Should he fail to follow the Lord? Because we were born as seed of evildoers, even after receiving the remission of sins, if we do not follow the Lord and do not do the work of serving the Lord, we come to act like the wretched demon-possessed man and to do even more evil. The Lord said that when an unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it says, *"'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Matthew 12:44–45)*. If, after meeting the Lord, a person goes out into the world again and lives in the world, he

comes to serve the evil spirits of the world, and demons come in all the more and seize him and make him their slave. Then the last becomes worse than the first—worse than before he believed in Jesus. I say this not to frighten you, but because there are in fact many who will become so. Even so, we have received salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit; so I give thanks, and you give thanks—truly we can only give thanks. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

True faith is believing the words Jesus has spoken

< Mark 5:21-43 >

"Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.' So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, 'If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.' Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?' But His disciples said to Him, 'You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'' And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, 'Daughter, your

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faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.' While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.' And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, 'Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat."

The passage is asking what true faith is

Mark chapter 5, verses 21 through 43, speaks about faith. In chapter 5, verses 1 through 20, Jesus met the demon-possessed man and cast out the demons that were in his heart. Afterward He crossed over again by boat to the other side, and while He was by the sea, Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, saw Jesus and fell at His feet, and "*begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your*

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hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.'" So Jesus went with him, and while a great crowd followed and thronged Him, a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood was healed of her disease by believing in Jesus.

A flow of blood is a disease in which the bleeding does not stop. A woman who suffered from this disease, while living in this world, went to many physicians, spent much money, and suffered many things, but far from gaining any effect, her disease only grew worse. When that woman heard the news that Jesus was passing by, she touched the garment of Jesus with the faith that believed in Him, and that instant her disease was healed. When Jesus turned around and asked who had touched His clothes, the woman fell down and confessed that it was she, and Jesus said, *"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."*

What is it that our Lord wants to say to us through this passage? It is this: What is true faith? When we believe in God, what kind of faith is true faith? Jairus thought of the healing of disease this way: he thought that if Jesus came and laid His hands on the sick part of the patient, the disease would be healed; so he asked, and so he believed. But the woman who had suffered from the flow of blood believed that she would be saved if she only touched the clothes of Jesus, and she touched them; and the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she realized in her body that the disease was healed.

Jesus is our Savior; He is Almighty God and the Creator. He is the One who parted the Red Sea, who raised the dead Lazarus, and who gives everlasting life to those who believe. Jesus is the One who created the universe and cast out the demons of the demon-possessed, and who, out of nothing, created the visible universe and all things and the invisible world as well. The question is whether we really believe that Lord who holds such

power. Not some experiential faith or emotional faith—but knowing what kind of One the Lord is, knowing that He is Almighty God, and believing the words He has spoken: that faith is true faith. To teach us this, the Lord allowed such events and is speaking to us.

The Lord, who raised the dead with a single word

While Jesus was on His way to Jairus's daughter, news arrived. It was that his daughter had already died, so he should trouble the Teacher no further. *"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe,'"* and He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and went together with him to the house of the ruler of the synagogue. There He saw the people weeping and wailing loudly, and when He said that the child was not dead but sleeping, the people ridiculed Him. Jesus put them all out, took the child's parents and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was, and the Scripture says He *"took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age."*

To the child lying dead, the Lord took her hand and said, Talitha, cumi—Little girl, I say to you, arise—and that child arose. Jairus had known that the disease would be healed if hands were laid on the patient, but Jesus raised his daughter with a single word. The dead came back to life at a single word.

What is the faith the Lord wants from us? It is to believe the word of God. Not trying to know and believe through some experience or sensation, but believing just as it is the word God

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has spoken. When Jesus Christ, who is God, spoke to the dead, she arose according to that word. When we believe in God, what kind of believing is true and right faith? It is believing the word of God just as it is. Knowing all the power of Jesus—who raised the dead, cast out the demons of the demon-possessed, parted the Red Sea, created this universe, formed man from the dust and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils—and believing the words He has spoken: that, the Lord is telling us, is true faith.

In the passage we saw before this one, the Lord cast the demons out of the man possessed by the Legion. If the Lord has said that human life is an existence without any worth—one that only commits sin, lives dragged along by greed, and can only meet destruction and go to hell—then believing that we are such people, just as the Lord has said, is genuine faith. The one who believes just as the Lord has spoken is the one who holds an excellent faith, a sound faith. Therefore you and I must become those who hold the faith that believes just as the Lord has spoken. Adults, young people, young students, and all God's workers must hold this faith. We must not try to believe only after having an experience, or try to believe only when some sensation comes. If God has spoken, that is the truth, and so we hold on to it and believe it just as it is. Only when we believe in that way does His work take place.

The Lord is the truth. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)*. If we believe in Jesus Christ, if we believe what He has done, we receive the remission of sins and come to enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore the Lord is the way to the kingdom of God. The words Jesus spoke are the truth. The truth means true words. There is not a single lie in them; the word of God is pure truth, and it means that it comes to pass just as it says. The word of the Lord is life. It is the living word, by which the one who believes receives salvation and the one who

believes receives blessing.

Knowing who Jesus is and believing His word is true faith

Let us look at this woman who had the flow of blood. She had tried medicine and tried everything, but the disease had only deepened until she reached the point of death, and she went through many hardships. Then she heard the news about Jesus and believed in that Jesus. She held the faith: if I only touch that One's clothes, I shall be healed. She had come to know about Jesus. She knew and believed that Jesus is God, who can do anything—the One who holds the power to do every good work, whatever it may be. So when the woman lightly touched the garment of Jesus, the flowing blood stopped, and the woman knew in her body that the disease was healed. The moment Jesus turned and asked who had touched His clothes, the woman fell down and told Him the whole story, and Jesus said, Your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healed of your affliction. That woman became healthy for the rest of her life. This shows what true faith is. People without faith believe making a commotion, speaking loudly in tongues and carrying on—but faith is believing that word. It is believing in Jesus exactly like this woman who had the flow of blood.

What kind of One is Jesus? He is the Creator, who created this universe. The Scripture says, *"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:10–12)*.

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Jesus is our Savior, who removed our sins. We were those who, possessed by demons and dragged all our lives by the desires of the flesh, could only go to hell. But to save such people the Lord came to this earth, was baptized by John and so took over our sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That we must know and believe. The one who receives Jesus, that is, the one who believes in His name, is the one who believes in his heart the fact that Jesus Christ is his true Savior and that He has saved him from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To those who believe in this way, God has given the right to become children of God.

We must learn true faith, know it, and hold it. We must not demand a faith of the senses. Rather than expecting some experience like growing hot while praying, we must hold true faith. The Lord said, *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7)*. Faith is exactly that. It is knowing and believing that Jesus really is Almighty God—that He is my God, my Savior, and my Shepherd. And it is asking before the Lord: You told us to ask, so I ask because I have need; I believe that if I ask, You will give. Then it comes to pass just so. For God hears our prayers and answers us. It says, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1)*. Faith is believing Jesus Christ and the word of God. It is believing not our circumstances but the word of God. Because the word of God is the truth and life, it is fulfilled just as that word says. Therefore the person who believes the word receives blessing from God. He receives the blessing of salvation, and he comes to receive every other blessing as well.

Jesus is God, who created all things and saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

We must learn true faith and become people of faith. If we do not believe the word of God, that is not faith. Jesus is truly our God. He made us; He made our first parents Adam and Eve; He made this universe and all things—what is on the earth, what is in the heavens, what is in the waters, what is visible and what is invisible—He made them all. The world of the galaxies, the world of the angels, and the kingdom of heaven—our Jesus made them. Believe that fact in your heart. Who is the One who did all this? He is God, who came to save us from sin—the Son of God the Father and our Savior, Jesus Christ. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Creator of all things and the Master of all things. He is our Savior, who came to deliver us from sin and destruction when we had fallen into sin. If we know Him so and believe Him so, we become people of faith; and if we believe what He has done—the word that He saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—we truly become children of God.

We must become those who believe according to the word of God. When we believe in that way, we not only receive salvation from sin but become children of God and gain everlasting life. And on this earth as well, if what our flesh and soul and thoughts desire is good, God satisfies the desires of our hearts. We must hold this kind of faith: the faith that if we believe and pray, God does it for us; and that if I do the work God is pleased with, God also becomes my side. *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1)*—such faith is what God wants from us. We have held such faith, and so we believe.

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The flow of blood shows our sin, which flows without stopping

A flow of blood is a disease in which blood flows and does not stop. What does this speak of? Does it not speak of sin? It is telling of our own image—born with sin and committing sin continually. But the Lord came to this earth as our Savior and removed with the gospel of the water and the Spirit these sins of ours that kept flowing out. If we believe in our hearts the work the Lord did when He came to this earth—that He was baptized by John and so took over and bore all our sins, was judged on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose from the dead—then that very instant our sins disappear. Though we commit sin because our flesh is lacking, we have received the remission of all sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit; so in our hearts we are the righteous without sin, and children of God. The flow of blood is healed.

When we did not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord gave, we were always slaves of sin, and we fell into the religions of the world and went through much suffering. As a wrong medicine makes a disease deeper, the religions of the world look good, but in the end they cannot bring a person to life. In Buddhism, for example, everything a person goes through is called karma. It says that because he lived so in a former life, he now suffers and enjoys accordingly, and it believes the doctrine of transmigration. But the universe and all things have a Creator. Without one who made it, there is nothing that has been made. All things come out from the Lord and return to the Lord. Because Jesus Christ made the universe and all things, all things exist. Man also exists because He made him; man has life because He gave him life; and when He takes that life back, man is no more. There is nothing whatever that comes

into being by itself.

There is no such thing as man having originally been a monkey which, as long ages passed, lost its tail and evolved in its other parts until it became man. God made the living creatures each according to its kind. Under the rule of environment a creature may become a variant, but at the root, no man has ever become a beast, and no beast has ever become a man. The Creator made them each according to its kind, and everything exists just as it was made.

It says, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony" (Hebrews 11:1–2)*. God is not visible to our eyes, but believing that God created the universe and made man—that is faith. Even a single flower in this world exists because God made it, and through it we come, the other way around, to know that God is and that God made it. Though air is invisible to the eye, we live breathing air. Whether or not one believes in his heart that air exists, air actually exists. He himself simply does not believe it; in reality it exists. The word is believed with the heart—that is faith. We must open our eyes to this thing called faith.

True faith grows when we learn and know the word

There is a story of a soldier whose lungs were diseased, but the army doctor took it for a cold and for a long time gave him only cold medicine, and only after the disease had deepened did they learn it was lung cancer. In fact, it is said that most ordinary illnesses are often healed because of the heart that believes—when the doctor makes up a medicine, the patient believes that

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taking it will cure him. A veterinarian, it is said, when a cow falls ill, does not know which medicine will work, and so feeds it several medicines together; and doctors also say that they themselves treat, but the One who heals is God. Renowned doctors do not overtrust their own skill. One surgeon says that he only does his best in the operation, and that living and dying rest with God. Because even they do not fully know how a person's life is healed, they say they pray for heaven's protection.

Faith is exceedingly important. When we first believe in Jesus, when we believe in Him as our Savior, we must first believe the fact that God made this universe and all things, and know and believe that that God is Jesus Christ. And we must believe that we ourselves are so worthless that we could only go to hell, but that Jesus put on human flesh, came to this earth, and saved us from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we do not believe that, it is not a sound faith, no work takes place, and salvation does not come.

That is why even the children who heard the gospel when they were young must be made to learn the gospel of the water and the Spirit again as they grow up. When one is young he hardly knows sin, but when he grows he must know. Not living according to the will of God is sin, and not believing God and the word God has spoken is the fundamental sin. Sin in Greek is called hamartia (ἁμαρτία): not hitting the target God has set, but hitting elsewhere—that is, everything by which we do not live according to the will of God is sin. Concerning sin Jesus said, *"of sin, because they do not believe in Me" (John 16:9)*. Who is the One God sent? He is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to this earth as our Savior to remove our sins, and He removed our sins with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The one who does not so believe is the sinner.

Then why are we sinners at the root? Because Adam and Eve,

the first parents of mankind, did not believe the word God had spoken and fell into sin, and we inherited that sin and were born carrying sin; therefore we commit sin, and therefore we are sinners. That is why we need a Savior. Who is our Savior? Jesus Christ. We were those who had fallen into deep waters spiritually, flailing about and dying, but the Lord came to save us: He was baptized by John and so took over and bore our sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us. Young students also must learn and know the word for their faith to become firm. We must learn and know the word and hold true faith.

Talitha, cumi—Little girl, I say to you, arise—He said, and she arose just so. The Lord spoke, and it came to pass just so. The Lord said, *"Let there be light; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3)*; He said, Let the waters be divided from the waters, and they were divided; He said, Let the earth bring forth vegetation and fruit trees bearing seed, and grass and flowers and vegetation came up from the earth. He said, Let the waters abound with fish each according to its kind, and the waters were filled with fish, and He made the birds fly above in the firmament. God spoke, and it came to pass just as He said. Now—do you and I believe this word? I believe. I believe that Jesus is our Savior, and yet in substance is God.

Believing the word God has spoken is faith. We must build up, one by one, the knowledge of God in our hearts, and keep learning. And so we must live in this world holding faith. If we stop at merely coming out to church faithfully, our faith dies before we know it. When we hear the word, we must hear it truly believing with the heart. When the preacher delivers the word, he may bring in illustrations not recorded in the word to help our understanding, but we must believe that the word being delivered is the word of God. If we cannot believe that, we do

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not believe Jesus either.

What is true faith? It is believing the word God has spoken. All of us must hold true faith, and we must also discern whether the faith we hold is true faith or not. If we purely believe the word of God, God fulfills it for us just as we believe. I believe that He will surely make it come to pass. It appears afterward according to your faith. We believed that if we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, the ministers and the saints of the world would also come to know and believe this gospel and preach it together with us—and that work is actually being fulfilled, and much of it has been fulfilled already. Though nothing is visible to the eye, the word that faith is the substance of things hoped for speaks precisely of such things.

We must hold the true faith that learns the word of God and believes that word. If we hold faith, things go well; but if we neither know about faith nor try to learn, and instead put forward our own stubbornness and the thoughts of the flesh, we die. A great many people met Jesus and followed Him, but not all of them followed Him to the end. Today also, people have met the word and met Jesus through the gospel of the water and the Spirit—but how many are there who receive the remission of sins and follow the Lord holding true faith? In fact, many people have left. Why did it become so? Not because they were worse or more evil than we, but because they did not hold true faith. Their faith was different from ours.

We believe the word of God. From the word we know, and believe just as it is, that Jesus is God and the Creator, who created the universe; that He is the Savior, who saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit; that He is the Judge; and that He is God, who gives us the everlasting kingdom of heaven. Believe that Jesus is the Creator, and God, who saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If you have no faith, read

our books. Knowledge is not gained by itself; only when we know can we believe. Read the books and read the Bible, acquiring knowledge and believing, and in the midst of that, faith grows up. It does not come about just by attending church. I ask you to believe, and also to learn. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Pray to the Lord earnestly and much

< Mark 5:21-43 >

"Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.' So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, 'If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.' Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?' But His disciples said to Him, 'You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'' And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, 'Daughter, your

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faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.' While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.' And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, 'Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat."

The Lord, who raised the dead and healed the sick

The passage is about a dead person coming back to life and Jesus, who raises the dead, and about the woman with the flow of blood receiving the healing of her disease. We think it a matter of course that the Lord raises even the dead and can do anything, and we do not doubt what we believe. In the passage, a man named Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, came before Jesus, fell at His feet, and begged Him earnestly, asking: my

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little daughter is at the point of death; come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be saved and live. When Jesus arrived at his house following Jairus, the daughter had already died, and people were wailing and preparing for the funeral. Jesus came there and said, Why do you weep? She is not dead but sleeping—and the people thought it strange and ridiculed Him. Jesus took only the three disciples, Peter, James, and John, and the child's parents, entered the room, took the hand of Jairus's dead daughter, and said, Talitha, cumi—Little girl, arise—and the twelve-year-old girl came back to life and rose up. And on the way to heal Jairus's daughter, the woman with the flow of blood, who had suffered much from many physicians, said, If I only touch that One's clothes my disease will be healed, and she touched them; and that instant the power of the Lord came upon her and she was healed.

What the passage teaches is *"begged Him earnestly"*

What does the passage tell us? We believe that Jesus is the Almighty, that He can treat our diseases and can raise even the dead, that He actually did so, and that He will do so hereafter as well. But when such a problem actually comes upon us, what should we do? If we fall into a deadly illness like Jairus's daughter, or if, like the woman with the flow of blood, we are in a situation where we go from physician to physician, only wasting our property while the disease grows worse, what should we do? We know, of course, that we must believe in the Lord and pray to the Lord. Then what attitude do we need?

Looking at the passage, when Jairus the ruler of the synagogue came before Jesus and made his request, he did not

say one word and stop. It says he *"begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.'"* He begged Him *"earnestly,"* pleading much. The woman with the flow of blood also suffered *"many"* things from *"many"* physicians and *"spent all that she had."* The word held in common here is *"much"* or *"many."*

What is the Lord teaching us? When we have some problem, we often pray once and think, Why does He not do it for me? We pray now and then and think, I believe—why does He not answer? But how could praying once, formally and with due politeness, be the same as praying earnestly and much? The Lord wants to hear the prayer of the one who begs much, the one who asks desperately, and He followed such a person—He followed Jairus. When we have some problem, the Lord wants us to pray not just once but frequently, much. If we, who are in the position of needing to receive help, act as if we were rich—saying, Lord, I believe, so heal me—one word only, and then do not pray, is that not an impudent attitude before the Lord? Would true faith arise in that way? It is when we really believe that the Lord will heal us, and ask desperately, much, and imploringly—asking and asking again while believing—that the Lord answers. The Scripture says, *"pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:17–18)*. When there is some problem, it is when we pray without ceasing until that problem is solved that we receive the Lord's help, and the Lord helps us. The life of faith is not something done in theory but something done in practice.

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First there must be an earnest heart that longs to be healed

What actually hurts really hurts, and what is painful is really painful. When we have a disease, the desire to be healed must first be in our hearts. We are not to throw everything onto the Lord and remain without any responsibility ourselves; if our body carries an illness, we will not be able to serve the Lord well or do the Lord's work well, and so we ourselves must ask much for healing. When we sincerely want to be healed, the Lord also truly wants to heal us.

Vain repetitions and earnest repeated prayer are different

Some people bring up the words *"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do" (Matthew 6:7)* and say that praying repeatedly and much until a matter is accomplished is a mark of no faith. But that is knowing it wrongly. Not to use vain repetitions means not to repeat mere words without even believing. If we really believe, we are to pray much. When we pray much—with the heart that longs to be healed, with the heart that longs for the problem to be solved, with the heart that longs to receive help—the Lord hears that prayer. That is why, though we each may not be able to pray much personally, when we gather as the church we pray with one accord over the work of preaching the gospel, over the problems of the saints, and over the several matters of the church, do we not? As the Lord said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20)*, He hears our prayer of one accord. To keep on praying much until the problem

is solved is the thing we are to do. It is not something God is to do; it is precisely what you and I must desire earnestly and must ask help for.

God answers the one who has prayed much. Let us think about it. If we did not pray much—prayed once in a while and then stopped—and yet the answer came, we would easily think it a thing that just happened by chance. Then we would turn that credit to ourselves, and though in fact God did it, we would neither thank God nor give Him the glory. Would God be pleased with that? That Jairus begged much is how it is expressed in the text, but in reality, holding on to the hem of Jesus' clothing—my daughter is at the point of death, so please help me; You must go to my house before any other place—with the heart of a parent, how much must he have clung to Him and pleaded!

Pray earnestly, until you are answered

It is the same with the person who truly wants to receive the remission of sins. The remission of sins is received by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished by being baptized by John and so taking over all our sins, carrying those sins and dying on the Cross shedding His blood, and rising from the dead; but the heart that comes out before that gospel must also be earnest like this. We must pray much and ask desperately. To be desperate is to ask until the very sap of the heart is drained. There is even a saying about asking until one's very insides are wrung out—if we ask with all our strength and with all our heart, praying and seeking help and believing and asking repeatedly, will God not hear us? The passage is giving us the lesson that to have our desire accomplished we

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must pray earnestly and much.

How is it with us? Are there not times when, even over things that surely must be accomplished, we pray once or twice and then stop? We must pray much. Only then is it engraved plainly on our hearts that God helped us, and we become people of faith, able, when we meet hard things, to solve those problems too by faith and by prayer. In the passage, Jairus actually begged much and had his dead daughter brought back to life. Was Jesus originally on His way to Jairus's house? He was being pushed by many crowds and healing the sick who stood before His eyes; is it not because Jairus especially asked much for help that He went to his house? If he had said, Help me, once and then stopped, the Lord would simply have gone about His other business. Even though we are God's people and God's workers, it is when we truly ask for help desperately, with all our heart and all our strength, that God helps us.

We pray over the things we earnestly long to see accomplished every time we gather. Yet at times praying repeatedly over the same request feels wearisome, and while the mouth prays, fleshly thoughts may flit in from moment to moment. Even so, as we keep on praying, it is accomplished, and then we come to pray for new things. We have already received many things as God's blessing, but we must keep on asking Him to help us much. In terms of position, we are the poor before God, and God is the One who is rich and abounding in power. He is the living One, and to the one who believes and asks much, to the one who seeks help, He gives help. The passage is telling us this today. That is why we must become such people.

Become a person who prays

If your body has fallen ill, ask much. Then God sometimes gives medicine, and sometimes heals the body. Holding the heart that wants to receive healing, the heart that wants to be well, we must ask: God, step in for me—I can do nothing by myself. When we also want to be healed and God also heals us, we can find health. Because we too want the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be preached to the whole world, we pray much before God, and God hears the prayer of such people and helps much. There is no loss in praying much. Praying is not an easy thing either. It takes much strength, and when we truly have no strength, we cannot even pray.

Is there no desire in your heart? Do you not want to live according to the will that God is pleased with? Pray much, and much again. And believe God. Then God accomplishes it. We must become people who pray. To teach us this, the Lord had this Scripture recorded, and has us read it and see it and preach it. That the sick may receive healing; that the gospel of the water and the Spirit may be preached through the books to the whole world without ceasing and all the more; that all the people who labor for the gospel may be kept from harm in the midst of dangerous things—let us go forward praying earnestly and much for these things. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The one who believes in the Lord alone

< Mark 5:25-43 >

"Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, 'If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.' Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?' But His disciples said to Him, 'You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'' And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.' While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.' And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the

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ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, 'Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat."

The Lord bestows grace on those who set their hope on Him

Jesus is the One who bestows grace on those who hold expectation toward Him and ask for His help. When Jesus went along the roads and the blind and the lepers cried out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me—the leper received healing, and the blind man also obtained his desire.

People hardly know this, but if a person truly seeks God and clings to God, God, on His own part, comes to visit him. Sometimes with the word, sometimes with His power—coming in various ways, He fulfills the desires of that heart in His own way.

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The woman who suffered from the flow of blood was healed

In the passage too there was a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years. This woman had suffered many things from many physicians and had spent all the property she had. Trying to cure the flow of blood, she went to many physicians and spent much money, but there was no effect at all, and rather the disease became worse than at the first.

At such a time this woman heard the news that Jesus was passing through her village. Because she had ordinarily heard the news about Jesus—the great works and miracles: that He healed lepers, raised up paralytics, and cast out demons—she held the earnest desire and the faith that her disease would be healed if she only touched the clothes of Jesus. The woman, mingled in the great crowd and pushed along, drew near to Jesus, and when Jesus was passing by, she touched His garment. In her heart there was the faith: this One can surely heal my disease; if I only touch this One's clothes, my disease will be healed.

When the woman touched the garment of Jesus, the fountain of her blood was dried up. In the old days the flow of blood was an incurable disease. For a woman especially, having this disease was fatal. The blood did not dry up but kept flowing out—it was no ordinary disease. Yet this woman, who had heard the news about Jesus and held faith, touched the clothes of Jesus and her disease was healed.

Jesus knew that power had gone out of Him, and asked who had touched His clothes. The disciples answered: with the crowd thronging You like this, how can we know who touched You? But the Lord sought this woman. The woman knew that Jesus was seeking her, and she came before Him, knelt down, and told Him: Lord, I touched Your clothes, and my disease has been

healed. The Lord looked at this woman and said, *"Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction,"* and this woman was released from that disease for the rest of her life.

Only the Lord heals the disease of sin in the heart

If we truly hold a desire toward the Lord, believe, and desperately ask for help, the Lord heals us. Then, what is the most incurable disease a person has? It is precisely the disease of sin in the heart. Truly wanting to receive the remission of sins, people go around this religion and that religion, and meet many religious leaders and people said to be excellent—but has the disease of sin in their hearts ever been healed? Man cannot heal the disease of sin that is in a man's heart. But if we come before the Lord holding the faith that the Lord can solve the sins in my heart—if we come with the faith that believes that the Lord will cleanly heal all my sins—there is no one who fails to receive healing. All receive healing.

The Scripture is speaking of that. Our God reveals, through the visible substance of this earth, the invisible world of God and His power. When the woman who had suffered from the flow of blood merely touched His clothes, Jesus knew that power had gone out. In the same way, in this age also, if a person who has believed many religions but could not receive the remission of sins and so suffers comes out before God, crying out earnestly with the faith that if he believes in Jesus he will receive the remission of sins—then, as the fountain of the blood was dried up, the problem of sin receives clean healing from its root to its fruit. Those who could not receive the remission of sins in many religions, but who came holding the faith that Jesus Christ alone

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can heal the disease of their hearts—all who believed in the Lord have received the remission of sins and been born again.

In this world there are many people called cult leaders. There are those who speak well, who say they work powers, who say they heal the diseases of the body. But such people cannot heal the source of the flow of blood. They may perhaps cure some symptom for a moment, but they cannot remit the sins of a person's soul. But those who come out to the Lord—those who come holding the sure faith that the Lord removes all my sins, and who hear the word—receive the remission of sins as soon as they gain even a little realization in the word.

Our God is the God who clothes with grace all those who hold a desire in the heart and come out to Him. If we truly hang our expectation on Jesus alone and believe and plead desperately, He surely hears our prayer. Our saints also need such things. As the woman who suffered from the flow of blood went to this physician and that physician, every physician said to be famous, and at the last went to the Lord, so if a person considers that he can solve his problems with people or with money apart from Jesus, he will neither request the Lord's help nor be able to receive it. But to those who say, Now nothing else will do; only the Lord can hear my prayer and fulfill the desire of my heart—those who hang their expectation on the Lord alone and pray to the Lord alone—our Lord bestows grace.

"Do not be afraid; only believe"

Next, let us look at the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. While Jesus was speaking to the woman healed of the flow of blood, people came from the house of the ruler of the synagogue and said: your daughter has died—why do you trouble the

Teacher any further? This ruler of the synagogue also had made his request to the Lord with the same heart as the woman with the flow of blood and was going along with Him, when people came from his house and said that she had already died, so he must give up. *"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe,'"* and He permitted no one to follow except Peter, James, and John, and went together to the house of the ruler of the synagogue.

In that house the people were weeping and wailing loudly. When Jesus said, Why make this commotion and weep? This child is not dead, but sleeping—the people ridiculed Him. However much You may be the Son of God and the Savior, we saw with our own eyes that this child died—how can You bring the dead back to life? But the Lord put them all outside, and then the Scripture records that He *"took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age."*

The Lord says: Do not be afraid; only believe. He is telling us to believe God. It looks impossible as man sees it, but if we only believe in Jesus, it is done. The dead also can come back to life, and problems also can receive solution. The problem is that we have many things to lean on besides Jesus. It is when we have asked help of other places and it is utterly no use—when we believe and entrust it, saying, Only Jesus can accomplish this work; Lord, I believe—that the problem is solved: this is what the passage teaches us.

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The Lord waits for us to trust in Him alone

We need only believe. Our receiving the remission of sins, and our sins disappearing—these also come by believing in Him. If we only believe the fact that the Lord came to this earth, was baptized by John in the Jordan River and so took over all the sins of mankind—all the sins you and I commit from birth until death, the sins that are in our hearts and all the sins we commit with our deeds—and bore them all, and was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose from the dead, then we receive the remission of sins and become the righteous. This is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. As the fountain of the blood was dried up, though the symptoms of sin seem to appear, in fact sin has been perfectly removed.

As we live on, we meet many problems that man cannot solve. The question at such times is whether we really believe in Jesus and ask Him. If we believe and ask Him, He hears our prayer and works. The problem is that around us there are many things that look fit to lean on. Sometimes, when things are urgent, one happens to hear the prescription of a person who never learned properly. But instead of asking the Lord only and believing, we go around here and there making requests, handing over what we have—and then, when nothing works, at the last we come back to Jesus and make our request.

Perhaps Jesus waited until this ruler of the synagogue's daughter died. He may have waited for that time so that the man would hang his expectation on Him alone. The Lord is saying to us: if you have means and methods, try them all; try them, and if it does not work, ask Me; but if you really believe Me, do not go asking here and there—ask Me from the very first. The Lord waits for us to trust Him. He waits for us to believe amply and to pray. We must know His heart. Not praying and then stopping,

but trusting Him—You surely can help me; You are the living One, and God, and our Savior; besides You there is no one on this earth who can give us help; I believe—when we so trust Him, we come to pray, and we come to receive the answer. We receive many answers when we pray—but when is it not answered? When we do not believe Him, when we do not ask Him alone, when we have many other places to make requests. It is when everywhere else is despair, and our expectation hangs on Him alone, that He answers.

Jairus's daughter was made whole. Talitha, cumi—Little girl, I say to you, arise—He said, and the girl arose. Many people were amazed. Jesus took with Him only three of the twelve disciples: Peter, James, and John. When He went up the Mount of Transfiguration also, it was these three. The one who believes truly and purely—such a one our Lord is seeking, and He is the God who is pleased to answer such people.

The Lord solved the problem of sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

What we learn through the passage today is that by going to man we can never receive the solution of the problem of sin. As the flow of blood was a disease that could not be cured in those days, so in this age also, the disease of sin inside man can be solved by no god of this world, by no man, and by no religion—only Jesus can solve it, and He has solved it. How was our problem of sin solved? When our Lord was baptized by John in the Jordan River, He bore the sins of you and me and of all the people of this world; so all our sins passed over to Jesus, and you and I were washed clean of our sins. And He went to the Cross and was nailed to it in His own body, which carried all our sins,

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and so received in our place the judgment of sin, of which it is said, *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. And He rose from the dead and completed our salvation. And so He delivered you and me from the judgment of sin and from destruction. Our Lord alone has delivered us from all our iniquities.

That we have received the remission of sins, become children of God and the righteous before God, gained the qualification to enter and live in His kingdom, and had the sins of our hearts washed white as snow so that we have become those without sin—all this has come through that one Person, Jesus, who accomplished the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Lord wants us to believe in Him. He is the Lord who bestows grace if we only believe. We have received the remission of sins—but can we entrust our whole life to Him? Do we believe that He helps us and blesses us? Whether we have that faith is what the Lord asks us. Will you go around this place and that, or will you say: Lord, I will ask You alone; I believe and trust in You alone? Those who trust in the Lord alone—such righteous ones receive the remission of sins and receive help in their living, and they live on, clothed daily in grace and receiving answers to their prayers.

Beloved saints, let us live holding faith, and let us live the life of faith knowing well what kind of One the Lord is. Above all, let us hang our expectation on the Lord alone and live by the faith that believes in the Lord, and so live receiving many favors all our life long. When there is a hard problem, let us ask the Lord in faith, and also let the servants of God and the saints know it, and pray together. If our own faith is lacking, we should pray together with those who are ahead of us in faith and receive the help of their faith. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Go home and tell of the compassion you have received

< Mark 5:1-20 >

"Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes. And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains, because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. And he cried out with a loud voice and said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.' For He said to him, 'Come out of the man, unclean spirit!' Then He asked him, 'What is your name?' And he answered, saying, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.' Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there near the mountains. So all the demons begged Him, saying, 'Send us to the swine, that we may enter them.' And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea. So

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those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.' And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled."

The first to meet Jesus in the region of the Gadarenes was not a man standing neatly dressed by the roadside. He lived among the tombs. Night and day he cried out and hurt his own body with stones. People seized him and tried binding him with shackles and chains. They did not try only once. They bound him many times, but he pulled apart the chains and broke the shackles. At last no one had the strength to control him. To the place where the repeated methods of binding had failed, the place where nothing more remained that human strength could do, Jesus came.

What we must see first in this scene is not the man's strange behavior but the powerlessness of the people. The chains could restrain his behavior for a moment, but they could not make him whole. The shackles could hold him in one place, but they could not send out the unclean spirit that was in him. Thicker chains

and stronger watching were not the answer. People bound him with shackles and chains many times, but they could not give that man a new heart and new life. The passage is not saying that human means are useless; it shows that there is a deep bondage that human means cannot reach.

We must not use this passage carelessly. We must not conclude that every disease or mental difficulty is demon possession. Neither must we make the sick distrust the care and treatment they need. Mark chapter 5 records the oppression of the unclean spirit that actually lay on this one man, and the authority of Jesus. Therefore, instead of putting hasty names on other people's suffering, we must look at the fact that Jesus met the man who came out from among the tombs and spoke to him.

Though the chains were broken, the bondage remained

He pulled apart the chains and broke the shackles, but that strength did not mean freedom. No one had the strength to control him, yet night and day he cried out among the tombs and in the mountains and hurt himself with stones. Escaping from people's bonds and being set free from the rule of the unclean spirit were not the same. His state reveals the fact that strength under no one's control does not give life and peace.

People commonly think that if no one can stop me, I am free. It seems that if I have more of what I want I will be satisfied, and that if I live only by my own judgment I will be at peace. But the heart whose master is desire demands more the more it gains. What a man has grasped grasps him, and he is sometimes wounded because of the very things he leaned on. This does not mean that money and honor and recognition and pleasure are

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themselves the unclean spirit of this passage. But when a person relies on them more than on God and entrusts to them the meaning of his life, he does not enjoy freedom but can be dragged along by desire. Thinking he has chosen for himself, he still cannot stop; and following what promised satisfaction, he only grows more parched.

People bound him with shackles and chains many times, but the passage does not explain the reason or what the people of that time were thinking. The recorded facts are that the bonds were broken again and again, and that no one could control him. Raising the strength of the restraints did not make him whole. Before the problem of sin we are much the same. When one resolution collapses, we make stricter rules, and when those too collapse, we condemn ourselves more severely. Rules can help in exposing wrong and setting boundaries, but condemnation does not create new life. Neither is there anyone who becomes righteous by the power of hating himself.

The record that night and day he hurt his own body shows that the destruction of sin is no abstract word. The wounds of a life that has left God leave their traces on real relationships, on the body, and on the mind. That is why the gospel does not treat sin lightly. The word that the remission of sins was accomplished once and for all does not mean that sin is trivial; it means that Jesus fully bore the price of sin, serious as it is. Not to call self-destruction freedom, not to dress up the rule of desire as individuality, and at the same time not to despise the person who has been wounded—this is the attitude of believing the gospel.

The man in the passage could not rescue himself by his own strength. His neighbors also could not make him whole. This teaches us to become honest in the place of salvation. We can trim our outward appearance, discipline our behavior, and set up

order to some degree. Education and training and law are certainly necessary for a community. But they cannot remove sin or cause a soul to be born again. It is not merely because man's resolve is weak. It is because salvation from sin and death is a work that only the Savior can do.

As soon as Jesus got out of the boat, He met the man. The man saw Jesus from afar and came running. The unclean spirit that ruled the man recognized Jesus and yet wanted to have nothing to do with Him. Calling out with the mouth who Jesus is, and receiving His salvation with the heart, are not the same. The unclean spirit knew the Lord's identity, but it resisted His authority. True faith does not stop at knowing information about Jesus; it receives into the heart the work of salvation He has done.

The word of Jesus accomplished what man could not do

What people had failed at many times, Jesus accomplished with the word. *"For He said to him, 'Come out of the man, unclean spirit!'" (Mark 5:8)* Before the Lord's command the unclean spirit could not hold out. Though its name was Legion and its number was great, it was not greater than the Lord's authority. The fact that they begged to be allowed to enter the swine also shows who holds the sovereignty. The passage is not a story that exaggerates the power of evil to frighten us. It is the word that makes plain that even the power no one could control lies under the command of Jesus.

After the unclean spirits went out, people came and saw him sitting clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. The passage records together this restored figure and the people's fear. Jesus sent the unclean spirit out of him and made the man whole.

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The unclean spirit said its name was Legion, saying that they were many. Jesus commanded it to come out of the man, and the unclean spirits begged to be allowed to enter the swine. Even where they would be sent, they had to beg Jesus. The passage shows together the fact that the unclean spirits were many and the command of Jesus that stood above them. However many the old habits of sin and however deep the entangled wounds, the ground of salvation is not the size of the problem but the completeness of the work Jesus accomplished.

The passage plainly contrasts the man's figure before and after. Before, night and day he cried out among the tombs and in the mountains and hurt his body with stones. After Jesus drove out the unclean spirit, he sat clothed and in his right mind. The passage does not say that all the problems of his living disappeared afterward. Nor do we need to add, by guess, inner feelings that are not recorded. What is clear is that the man no one could control was, after the command of Jesus, present before people in a whole state. This change shows the authority of Jesus.

In our problem of sin also there is a depth that cannot be solved with man's chains. The resolve to sin a little less, the effort to do many good deeds, and the determination to pile up religious exertions can change a part of life. But they cannot remove the sins already committed, or change the heart into the standing of a righteous person without sin. That is why Jesus, the Son of God, came Himself in the body of a man. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took on the sin of the world—our fundamental sin and all the sins of our whole life. And carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, received the judgment of sin and died, and He actually rose from the dead. Jesus completed once and for all the salvation from sin and death.

The person who believes this completed work with the heart receives the remission of sins, in which all sins are removed once and for all. He receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, is born again, and becomes a child of God. This is not a reward for having managed one's heart cleanly. Nor is it the result of binding the chains more firmly. It is the grace received by believing the work Jesus accomplished—taking on, being judged, and rising again. In the person who has received the remission of sins, the weakness and lack of the flesh may remain, but that lack cannot turn the Lord's once-for-all salvation into something unfinished. The believer is no longer a sinner holding sin in his heart, but a righteous person washed of all sins, and a child of God.

Therefore knowing one's own state honestly and knowing the Lord's great salvation must go together. If we do not know that we cannot save ourselves, we count the Lord's compassion small. And if we look only at our own wretchedness and do not see the salvation the Lord accomplished, we remain in despair. The passage does not end at man's powerlessness. Jesus came, and spoke, and broke the bondage, and made one man whole. Salvation hangs not on how seriously I have collapsed, but on who the Savior is and what He has accomplished.

Seeing the same great thing, the responses differed

The people of the village saw the man made whole. They heard what had happened to the man who had been ruled by the unclean spirit, and they heard what had happened to the herd of swine. Yet they did not say they wanted to know Jesus more. Rather, they pleaded with Him to depart from their region. They did not refuse Jesus because they had failed to see a miracle. Even after seeing the plain change before their eyes, they did not

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want to be with Jesus.

This contrast shines a light on our own hearts. Acknowledging that the authority of Jesus is amazing, and receiving Him as the Lord of my life, are different. We may wish the Lord to do for us what is profitable, and yet wish Him not to touch my standards, my possessions, and my plans. We may welcome the Lord's grace and yet feel the Lord's rule burdensome. The Gadarenes saw the authority of Jesus, but they asked Him to leave. Fear does not always lead on to faith. What is needed is the faith that opens the heart before the Lord.

The restored man, on the other hand, begged to be with Jesus. But Jesus did not grant his plea; He told him another way. The road of following the Lord is not always the same as what I have imagined. For one person, following was riding in the boat together with Jesus; for this man, following was returning home.

"However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.'" The Lord did not send him first to a strange place. He sent him back to the place where he had lived and to his own people. The passage does not record how his people received him. What is clear is that he proclaimed in Decapolis the great things Jesus had done for him, and that all the people marveled. His proclamation set at its center the great things the Lord had done and His compassion.

What the Lord told him to tell also matters. He did not tell him to boast of the strength of his own will. He did not tell him to speak of the strength that broke the chains. He told him to tell how the Lord had done great things for him and had had compassion on him. The center of testimony is not the greatness of the restored man but the Lord who bestowed compassion. When we preach the gospel it is the same. We do not put forward

how excellently I have changed; we tell how Jesus moved me, who could not be saved, into the place of the remission of sins and of life.

The great things and the compassion are not separated from each other. Jesus drove the unclean spirit out of a man who lived among the tombs and made him whole. The passage records together the great things the Lord did and His having pitied him. In the baptism of the Jordan, the Cross, and the resurrection that saved us also, the power and the love of God appear together.

After the word to return home, he proclaimed in Decapolis the things Jesus had done. Before, he had cried out among the tombs and in the mountains; now his words carried the great things of Jesus. Through these facts, before and after, the passage shows the command of Jesus and the obedience of the man. Salvation is not a work that makes a person flee from reality; it makes him enter into the midst of real relationships holding a new standing and purpose.

The compassion received bears fruit in the place of our living

The man obeyed the word of Jesus and proclaimed in Decapolis, and all the people marveled. The people of the village had asked Jesus to leave, but even after the boat had gone, the news of the great things the Lord had done remained. The passage records the people's response as marveling. The center his proclamation revealed was not his own past but the great things the Lord had done.

The movement the passage records is also worth looking at closely. The man first met Jesus among the tombs, and afterward sat clothed and in his right mind. When Jesus boarded the boat

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he begged to be with Him, but he was not permitted, and received the command to go to his own house and his own people. After that he proclaimed in Decapolis the great things Jesus had done for him. Meeting, restoration, plea, command, and obedience are recorded in this order. His testimony was not a story invented apart from these recorded events; it was the telling of the compassion he had actually received from the Lord.

Here we must make the order plain. It is not because he proclaimed that he was released from the unclean spirit. Nor was he made whole because he spoke to his own people. First Jesus met him, and commanded, and made him whole. After that He sent him home and had him testify. Testimony was not a condition for obtaining salvation, but the fruit of faith that a saved man bears. If this order is reversed, preaching the gospel and serving also end up becoming a heavy price to pay.

We too must preach the gospel, serve the church, and love our neighbors. But it is not by such things that we buy the remission of sins or maintain salvation. Offerings and service and obedience and sacrifice cannot supplement the salvation of Jesus. Jesus completed salvation, and we receive it by faith. And the life we have received shows itself in thanksgiving and serving and testimony. When the fruit is slow, rather than condemning one another, we must help one another to look again at the compassion the Lord has bestowed. The more deeply we know grace, the more there grows not a heart dragged along by compulsion but a heart that responds with thanksgiving.

Home and workplace and close relationships are the places where our words are listened to most strictly. There, our actual attitude is seen before our religious expressions. Even a righteous person who has received the remission of sins may still be lacking in the flesh, and so, when we do wrong, we must turn and apologize. But that turning is not an act done in order to be

saved again. It is the fruit by which a child of God, who has already received the complete remission of sins, walks in the light and sets his relationships right. The lips that tell the Lord's compassion and the life that grows to resemble that compassion must be together.

The word to tell his own people does not mean, either, to treat those near us only as objects of preaching. A saved person must listen to the words of his family, look after their needs, be patient long, and let the compassion he has received flow out through his relationships. If the words are big but there is no compassion in the life, the testimony can be obscured. Conversely, if we live kindly without any words, it may never be passed on who accomplished that salvation. We must speak plainly the great things of the Lord, and at the same time yield ourselves so that His grace shapes our attitudes.

Are you perhaps looking at your own condition now and thinking that no one can change you? Because of long-repeated sins and desires and wounds, do you want to give up on yourself? Man's chains failed, but that does not mean the word of Jesus fails. Even the unclean spirits, many as a legion, could not overcome the Lord's command. Above all, Jesus took on all our sins and received their judgment and rose again, and so opened the way of complete salvation. Instead of grasping your own strength more firmly, believe with your heart the work the Lord has accomplished.

And if you have already received the remission of sins, remember the great things the Lord has done for you. Do not compare yourself with others and count your testimony small. The first mission given to the man of Gadara was to return to his own house. In the place where we stand today, we can tell the compassion we have received, pity those near us, and faithfully carry out the work entrusted to us. That is not the price that buys

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salvation, but the grace of salvation surely bears such fruit.

People could bind him, but they could not bring him to life. Jesus brought him to life and sent him back among the people. The cries he once raised among the tombs and in the mountains were changed into the proclamation, in Decapolis, of the great things of Jesus. The beginning and the center of this change were not the man's will but the authority and the compassion of the Lord. We too, by that compassion, have received the remission of sins and become whole—so let us live in the places of our lives as witnesses who tell the great things the Lord has done. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The word heard amid the news of death

< Mark 5:21-43 >

"Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.' So Jesus went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him. Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment. For she said, 'If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.' Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, 'Who touched My clothes?' But His disciples said to Him, 'You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'' And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. And He said to her, 'Daughter, your

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faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.' While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?' As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.' And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw a tumult and those who wept and wailed loudly. When He came in, He said to them, 'Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him. But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those who were with Him, and entered where the child was lying. Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years of age. And they were overcome with great amazement. But He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that something should be given her to eat."

Jairus's little daughter came to the point of death. Though he was a ruler of the synagogue, he came to Jesus, fell at His feet, and begged Him earnestly. He asked Him to come to his house and lay His hands on the child so that she might live. Jesus did not turn him away, but walked the road together with him. The passage records Jairus's action and his plea, but it does not say how he regarded his own dignity.

While Jesus was going with Jairus, a great crowd surrounded and pressed Him. On the way, the woman with the flow of blood

touched the garment of Jesus, and Jesus asked who had touched His clothes. The passage does not record what Jairus felt during that time. The order of the events shows that after the urgent plea there came the woman's healing and confession, and then from Jairus's house came the news of death.

We also have such times. We pleaded with the Lord, and we even heard the word that He is with us, yet the situation does not quickly unravel. The answers to other people's prayers are heard, while my problem seems only to be delayed. It can even feel as if the Lord did not know my circumstances. But Mark chapter 5 shows that even in the time that looks like delay, Jesus does not miss a single person, and that He works with an authority greater than the final news.

In the passage the span of twelve years appears twice. One woman had suffered from a disease for twelve years, and Jairus's daughter was twelve years old. To one person, twelve years was a time of continued suffering; to one family, twelve years was the time of life in which the child had grown. Now the events of these two persons are joined on the one road Jesus walks. Jesus heard the woman's words and spoke to her of faith and peace, and then said to Jairus, who had heard the news of death, to believe, and kept on going to his house.

We easily compare sufferings with one another. We think the more urgent person should come first, or say that the one who has been sick longer should receive the greater attention. But the passage records both the fact that Jesus spoke to the woman with the flow of blood and the fact that He went to Jairus's house and raised the girl. Following this order of events, rather than envying another person's restoration, we must learn the authority of Jesus, who gave the woman peace and commanded life to the girl.

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The Lord, who sought out one person in the crowd

The people who surrounded and pressed Jesus were many. The disciples found it hard to understand the question of who had touched Him, for countless people were touching Him. But Jesus knew the one woman who had touched Him in faith. The body's coming in contact and the heart's relying on Jesus were not the same. The fact that she was inside the crowd could not explain this woman's meeting with Him.

That woman had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years. She had suffered many things from many physicians and had spent all she had, but there was no effect at all; rather it grew worse. We must not read this record as a distrust of medical treatment itself. Those who are sick today must receive the care and treatment they need. The passage shows the desperate situation of this woman, who over long years had used every means without solution, and the faith with which, from that place, she came to Jesus.

The woman had heard the news of Jesus. And she held in her heart: if I only touch His clothes, I shall be saved. What she relied on was not the strength of her own hand but the authority of Jesus. The act itself of touching held no magical efficacy. She believed who Jesus is, and she came to Him. Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she came to know in her body that she was healed.

The woman did not first step out before the people and explain her situation. She came in the crowd from behind and touched Him. The passage does not tell the reason in detail, and so we cannot add feelings to it as if they were facts. Jesus knew the touch of the woman who had been in the crowd, and He sought her out. To people's eyes it was a touch indistinguishable within the crowd, but before the Lord it was not hidden.

Yet Jesus did not leave the woman to disappear quietly. He asked who had touched His clothes, and He looked around to see the woman. The woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth. Jesus did not rebuke her. *"And He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.'"* To the change she had felt in her body, the Lord's word was added. She was not a person who had secretly obtained power and left; she became a person called Daughter by the Lord and given the word of peace.

The point that she told Him the whole truth shows that faith goes together with truthfulness. Faith is not a matter of dressing up one's circumstances. It is not shouting that one is healthy while hiding the disease, nor pretending not to fear while being afraid. The woman laid before the Lord what had been done to her and what had now come to pass. The person who believes the word of the Lord does not avoid facts. He goes before the Lord, who is greater than the facts, carrying the facts with him. What the Lord gave after the honest confession was not shame but the calling of Daughter and peace.

Faith is not making one's own feelings large. Nor is it a technique of manufacturing strong conviction by oneself to move the Lord. This woman's faith did not believe her own possibility; it relied on the authority of Jesus. Therefore we must not try to measure the size of faith by the heat of our emotions or by special experiences. Faith is the question of whom we believe, and of whether we receive with the heart the word that He has spoken.

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The two voices heard in Jairus's most urgent hour

While He was speaking peace to the woman, people came from Jairus's house. Their words were blunt. *"While He was still speaking, some came from the ruler of the synagogue's house who said, 'Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?'" (Mark 5:35)* It was not the news that the disease had deepened; it was the news that she had died. By man's judgment there was no longer any reason to bring Jesus along. All the labor up to now, the pleading made falling at His feet, and the walking toward the house—everything seemed to have become too late.

To Jairus, two voices were heard in the same place. One voice said that his daughter had died, so he should now stop. The other voice said not to fear, but only believe. Jesus had not failed to hear the news of death. He heard the word being spoken beside Him. And into the very midst of that news He put His word. *"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, 'Do not be afraid; only believe.'"* Faith is not denying bad news. Jesus also heard the word that the daughter had died. Faith is receiving the Lord of life and His word as greater than that reality.

What Jairus said at this moment, the passage does not record. We cannot make up a great confession of faith for him. Jesus went together to the house of the ruler of the synagogue. We must not add further to Jairus's inner state and his next actions. The fact we are to hold is that even after the news of death, Jesus said not to be afraid but only believe, and that according to that word He went to the house.

When circumstances look favorable, we easily say that we believe. But when the situation crosses the last line we have drawn, we think that even the Lord can do no more. Right after the people reported that the child had died, Jesus told Jairus not

to be afraid but only believe. Faith is directed not at the child's condition but at Jesus, who spoke.

Fear does not always tell only lies. Sometimes it informs us of real danger. The news of death that Jairus heard was not false either. Therefore faith is not an attitude that ignores danger or refuses to feel sorrow. The Lord said to Jairus, *"Do not be afraid; only believe."* When fear fills the heart, we must look at this recorded word and at the Lord of life who spoke this word.

That our prayer was not answered at the time we wished does not mean that the Lord is late. Yet neither must we turn this passage into a promise that every disease and every death will be reversed right now. If we make faith into a formula that forces a particular outcome, we come to condemn the person who did not obtain the outcome he wished as lacking faith. The center this passage has us hold is not the faith of man that manipulates outcomes, but Jesus, who even in the face of death speaks and raises up life.

Even amid ridicule, the word did not change

When Jesus came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, the people were weeping and wailing loudly. That sorrow was a response fitting the reality that the child had died. Jesus said to them that the child was not dead but sleeping. The people ridiculed Jesus. To them death was all too plain, and the word of Jesus sounded like a word that did not fit reality.

But the people's ridicule could not weaken the Lord's authority. Jesus took the child's parents and the three disciples, entered where the child was, and took the child's hand. The passage records that in the house the people wept and wailed, and that Jesus went in to the child and took her hand.

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"Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, 'Talitha, cumi,' which is translated, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise'" (Mark 5:41). When Jesus spoke, the girl immediately arose and walked. Even death could not defy the word of Jesus. Between the people's wailing and their ridicule, one word of the Lord created the reality of life. Jesus is not only One who heals disease; He is the Lord of life, who commands the dead and raises them up.

Here we must engrave on our hearts the important emphasis of the passage. True faith is not believing only after manufacturing assurance through the senses; it is knowing who Jesus is and believing the word He has spoken. It is not acknowledging the word of Jesus as true only after seeing the girl alive and moving; it is believing the One who spoke, even while the condition of death still lies before our eyes. Faith is not calling what is visible false; it is receiving through the word the authority of the Lord who is not visible.

Jesus is the Son of God, the Master of the universe and of life. The unclean spirits of the Gadarenes also obeyed His command; the disease of twelve years also withdrew before His authority; and death could not keep holding the girl. The events of Mark chapter 5 show different sufferings, but they point to one Person. Jesus is the Lord, who crosses over the boundaries man cannot solve, and speaks, and brings to life.

Saving faith also receives the completed word

In the faith of the remission of sins the same principle is important. We easily look for the ground of the remission of sins in our own feelings. We try to judge our salvation by whether the heart was hot when we prayed, whether we shed many tears,

whether we lived more devoutly than yesterday. But feelings and deeds change. The ground of salvation is not in our changing selves but in the unchanging work Jesus accomplished.

The Jesus we believe is the Son of God, who defeated death and actually rose again. That resurrection is the confirmation that the salvation He accomplished for us is complete. When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, He took on the sin of the world, including all our sins of past and present and future, and He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and died. And He rose again on the third day, and so gives those who believe new life and the living hope of the coming resurrection of the body.

When a person receives this fact of salvation just as the word says, the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished once and for all becomes that person's own. God gives him the Holy Spirit as a gift and makes him a born-again child. The remission of sins is not something that exists when today's feeling is good and disappears when tomorrow it shakes. It is received by believing, according to the word, the salvation Jesus accomplished once and for all. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, though the weakness of the flesh remains, is in his heart a righteous person without sin. This is not a word telling us to take our lack lightly; it means that the salvation of Jesus is more complete than our lack.

As the woman with the flow of blood knew what had happened in her own body and told Jesus the whole truth, we also must not hide our own state before the word. We acknowledge sin and turn from it; but we must not think that repeated confession and tears complete over again the atonement of Jesus. We must set our hearts on the salvation the Lord accomplished with the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. That we believe the word rather than feelings does not mean

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holding only cold knowledge. It means entrusting the whole heart to the word, which is the truth, and obtaining peace from that word.

We do not force outcomes; we trust the Lord of life

After the girl arose, Jesus strictly warned them that no one should know it, and commanded that something be given her to eat. The passage records these two commands, but explains their motive no further. We are to receive as they are the warning not to make it known and the command to give her food.

The record that the girl at once arose and walked reveals the life authority of Jesus. But this event cannot be regarded as the same event as the actual death and resurrection of Jesus, or as the future resurrection of the bodies of the saints. Our everlasting hope is in Jesus' own death and resurrection. Jesus bore our sins, was judged, actually died, and actually rose again. Because of that resurrection, the person who has received the remission of sins lives now in new life, and also hopes for the resurrection of the body that is to come.

We too must learn the word and lay it in our hearts, rather than seeking exaggerated signs to display our faith. We must read the Bible and rightly come to know who the Lord is and what He accomplished. The mere fact of having been long inside the church cannot take the place of the heart that believes the word. Though the crowd clung close around Jesus, it was not the same as the faith of the one woman. We must examine whether, even after hearing the word, we are setting up only our own judgment as the final standard.

Neither must we refuse medical treatment or make reckless choices on the ground that we live by faith. The events of Jairus

and the woman with the flow of blood testify of the life authority of Jesus; they do not give a formula that every believer must receive healing in the way and at the time he desires. We receive the help we need when we are sick, weep together when we are sorrowful, and pray—while entrusting the outcome to the Lord's wisdom. Faith is not a power that forces on the Lord the ending I have decided; it is the heart that does not let go of the Lord of life before whatever ending may come.

In the life that believes the word, the labor of learning is also needed. We cannot say that we believe the word while not knowing what He has said. We must keep the Bible near, examine the word we have heard, and place our feelings and experiences under the word. Repeating familiar religious phrases and knowing the Lord's will are different. We must receive not only the words that suit today's circumstances, but also the word that corrects my judgment and sets my faith straight. The more we learn the word, the more plainly we come to know Jesus, the object of our faith.

In the time of waiting, the grace that has come to another person can feel like my delay. But the reader sees the order of events in which Jairus's plea and the woman's healing are joined on one road. The passage does not state that Jairus directly saw or heard that scene. What is clear is that after Jesus spoke peace to the woman, the news of death came, and that immediately He told Jairus not to be afraid but only believe. And then Jesus went to Jairus's house and raised the girl.

When fear rushes in, what do we hear the loudest? The words of circumstance are concrete and immediate. They say that it is over now, that there is no more need to pray, that holding to the word is foolish. The word of the Lord is sometimes heard briefly between those voices—the word not to fear, but believe. It is short, but because the One who spoke that word is the Lord of

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life, it is enough.

Are you perhaps discouraged now because the answer seems to be delayed? Read again the order this passage records. Jesus sought out the woman with the flow of blood on the road, heard her words, and declared peace to her. After the news of death came, He told Jairus to believe, and went all the way to his house. And He took the girl's hand and raised her up, and commanded that something be given her to eat. Not one scene was left out, and to each person the needed word was given.

Therefore do not make faith a technique for obtaining outcomes. To Jairus, even after the news came that his daughter had died, the word was given not to be afraid but only believe. The center of faith is not my ability to secure the time I want, but Jesus. He bore our sins and was judged and died, and rose again, and so completed salvation. To the person who believes that fact, He gives the remission of sins and new life and the hope of the coming resurrection of the body.

The latter half of Mark chapter 5 begins with Jairus's plea, passes by the confession of the woman who stopped Him on the road, lets us hear together the news of death and the word not to fear, and at last comes to the fact that the girl arose and walked. The woman spoke the facts without hiding them; Jairus went home together with Jesus; and the girl arose at the word of the Lord. Let us not change or skip over the order of these events, but engrave them on our hearts just as they are. True faith is not a technique that manages circumstances; it is knowing who Jesus is—the One who, even after the news of death, speaks and commands life—and receiving His word. ✉

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CHAPTER

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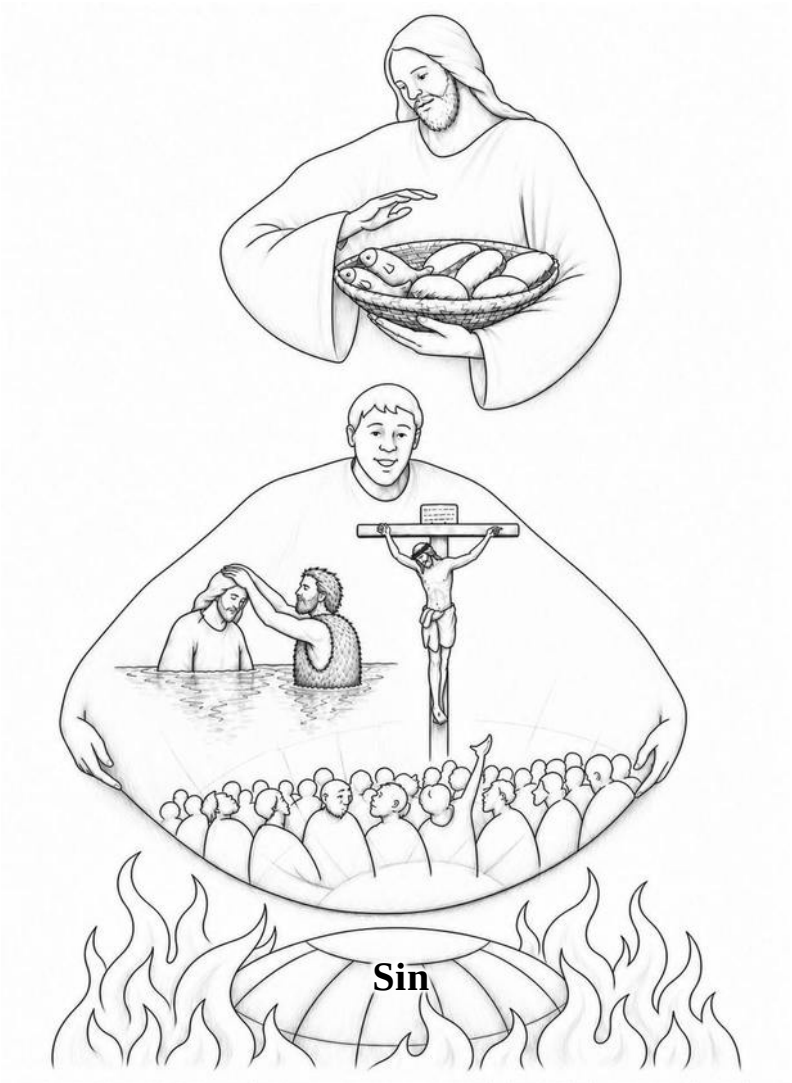

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Mark Chapter 6

< Mark 6:1-56 >

“Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?’ So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, ‘A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.’ Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching. And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts— but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. Also He said to them, ‘In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!’ So they went out and

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preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them. Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, 'John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.' Others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.' But when Herod heard, he said, 'This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!' For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, 'Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.' He also swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.' So she went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask?' And she said, 'The head of John the Baptist!' Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought.

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And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb. Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, 'Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.' For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.' But He answered and said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' And they said to Him, 'Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?' But He said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and see.' And when they found out they said, 'Five, and two fish.' Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled.

And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men. Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, 'Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.' Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened. When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well."

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1) Summary of the entire content

Mark chapter 6 begins with the event in which Jesus was rejected in His hometown, and records His sending out of the twelve disciples two by two, the death of John the Baptist, the miracle of feeding the five thousand, His walking on the sea, and His healing of the sick at Gennesaret. The people of Jesus' hometown were astonished at His wisdom and mighty works, but they looked only at His familiar human background and did not receive Him. Jesus gave the twelve disciples power over unclean spirits and sent them out to preach, and the disciples preached repentance, cast out demons, and healed the sick. Meanwhile Herod, hearing the news about Jesus, was afraid, thinking that John the Baptist, whom he had killed, had risen. John the Baptist had been put in prison for pointing out Herod's wrongful marriage, and he was beheaded as Herodias's daughter demanded. When the disciples returned from their ministry, Jesus intended to let them rest, but He had compassion on the great multitude, who were like sheep without a shepherd, taught them the word, and fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fish. Afterward Jesus came to His disciples walking on the sea and made the wind cease. After He arrived at Gennesaret, all the sick who touched the hem of His garment were healed. This chapter shows the compassion and the power of Jesus, who teaches, feeds, and heals even while being rejected by those who do not believe.

1. Jesus, rejected by the people of His hometown (verses 1–3)

Jesus went with His disciples to His hometown and taught the word in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Many who heard His teaching were astonished and asked where He had gotten

such wisdom and power.

But their astonishment did not lead to faith. They knew Jesus as the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and they knew that His brothers and sisters were living among them. On the ground that they were familiar with His human background and family, they did not receive Him as the One sent from God.

The people could not deny the wisdom and the mighty works Jesus performed, but they could not reconcile them with the ordinary carpenter they had known. They did not try to recognize Him by the standard of His word; they judged Him by the standard of their own experience and preconceptions.

The more a person thinks he knows someone well, the more he may fail to see that one's true self. Holding outward information and knowledge about Jesus and receiving Him by faith are different things.

2. Jesus marvels at the unbelief of His hometown (verses 4–6)

Jesus said that a prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house. People may treasure the word of God when they hear it from afar, and yet take it lightly when it is delivered through someone familiar.

Jesus did no great mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. This does not mean that Jesus lacked power. It means that because of the people's stubborn unbelief, they neither sought His grace nor received it in faith.

Jesus marveled at the unbelief of the people of His hometown. Though they had directly encountered His word and His power, they looked only at His human background and refused Him. Unbelief may arise from a total lack of evidence,

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but it can also arise because a person will not lay down his own thinking even before clear evidence.

Even after being rejected in His hometown, Jesus did not stop His ministry, but went around the villages teaching the word. The refusal of one region could not halt the work of the kingdom of God.

3. Jesus, who sent out the twelve disciples two by two (verses 7–13)

Jesus called the twelve disciples, sent them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. The disciples were not sent to work alone; they were sent in pairs so that they could help each other and bear witness together.

Jesus commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts—and to wear sandals but not to put on two tunics. This was not so much a general command that preachers of every age must always go unprepared, as a direction for the disciples of that time to rely on God's provision rather than on their own possessions and preparations, and to carry out their mission with urgency.

He told them to stay in whatever house they entered until they left that place, and, wherever they were not received or heard, to shake off the dust under their feet when they departed, as a testimony. The disciples were not given the responsibility of forcing the gospel on people or of arguing endlessly. Once the word had been clearly delivered, the responsibility for receiving or refusing it lay with the hearers.

The disciples went out and preached that people should repent. They cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them. The power they exercised was not to display their own ability, but to show, with the authority

Jesus had given, that the kingdom of God was drawing near.

4. The various rumors about Jesus and Herod's fear (verses 14–16)

When the name of Jesus became widely known, King Herod also heard the news. People said that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, or Elijah, or a prophet like one of the prophets of old.

The people acknowledged the power of Jesus, but they did not know exactly who He was. They understood Him as a great prophet or a figure of the past appearing again, but they did not reach the fact that He is the Son of God, come as the Savior.

Herod thought that John, whom he had beheaded, had risen. This was not right faith in the resurrection, but a judgment born of the guilt and fear of having killed a righteous man. Unresolved sin and wrongdoing leave fear in a person's heart and can make him see new events in a distorted way.

At this point Mark pauses the account of Jesus' ministry and explains how John the Baptist came to die.

5. John the Baptist, killed for speaking the truth (verses 17–29)

Herod had married Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. John the Baptist told Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. John did not change God's standard even before the power of a king, but pointed out his sin.

Herodias held a grudge against John over this and wanted to kill him. Herod knew that John the Baptist was righteous and was perplexed when he heard his words. When Herod heard John, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly.

But Herod only listened to John's words; he did not turn from his own wrong. It is not enough to feel uneasy or moved

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when hearing the word. One must acknowledge his wrong and actually turn from it.

On Herod's birthday, Herodias's daughter danced and pleased Herod and his guests. Herod swore to her excessively that he would give her whatever she wanted, up to half his kingdom. Following her mother's direction, the girl demanded the head of John the Baptist on a platter.

Herod was exceedingly sorry when he heard this demand. But because of the oath he had made before his guests and because he wanted to save face, he did not refuse the request. He knew what was right, but he counted people's eyes and his own honor more important than the will of God.

In the end Herod sent a man and had John beheaded in prison. John's head was brought on a platter and handed to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When John's disciples heard of it, they came, took his body, and buried it.

John the Baptist suffered and died because he spoke the truth. His death shows that a servant of God is not always guaranteed safety and success in this world. At the same time, Herod's conduct warns how great an evil a person can reach when he follows desire, face-saving, and people's opinions rather than the word of God.

6. The returning disciples and the multitude like sheep without a shepherd (verses 30–34)

The apostles who had been sent out returned to Jesus and reported all that they had done and taught. If the start of their ministry was Jesus' calling and sending, the close of their ministry was also returning to Jesus and reporting to Him.

When there were so many people coming and going that the disciples had no time even to eat, Jesus told them to come aside to a deserted place and rest a while. Jesus knew not only His

disciples' spiritual mission but also their physical weariness and their need of rest. Rest is not abandoning the mission; it is a process needed in order to keep on serving.

But when the people saw Jesus and His disciples departing, they ran there on foot from the many towns and arrived first. Jesus saw the great multitude and had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Sheep without a shepherd can hardly find protection, guidance, and food. The people of that day had religious leaders, but they needed a true shepherd who would lead their souls with the truth and feed them the word of life.

Even in a situation where He was tired and needed rest, Jesus did not send the multitude away, but began to teach them many things. The compassion of Jesus did not end as mere emotional sympathy; it appeared in the act of teaching the truth to those who had lost their way and supplying what they needed.

7. Feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fish (verses 35–44)

When the hour had grown late, the disciples said that since the place was deserted and the time was late, He should send the multitude away to buy themselves food in the surrounding villages. The disciples' judgment was realistic and natural, for they had neither enough food nor enough money to feed so many people.

But Jesus said to the disciples, *"You give them something to eat."* The disciples asked whether they should go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread to feed them. Jesus had them check how many loaves they had, and the disciples found five loaves and two fish.

Jesus had the multitude sit down in groups of hundreds and

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of fifties on the green grass. After seating them in order, He took the five loaves and the two fish and, looking up to heaven, blessed them.

Jesus broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people, and He also divided the two fish among them all. Jesus was the source of the supply, but the disciples took the role of passing on to the multitude what they had received from Him.

All the people ate and were filled, and when they took up the leftover fragments of bread and fish, they filled twelve baskets. Those who had eaten the loaves were five thousand men alone. Jesus did not merely divide what was lacking so that they barely escaped hunger; He made everyone eat their fill, with plenty left over.

This miracle displays the provision of God, who fed His people in the wilderness, and shows that Jesus is the true Shepherd, who feeds the flock that has no shepherd. What the disciples had was small, but when it was placed in the hands of Jesus, it became the instrument that gave life to many.

8. Jesus, who came to His disciples walking on the sea (verses 45–52)

Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. Then Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. Even after a great miracle and the attention of so many people, Jesus took time to pray alone to God the Father.

When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and Jesus was alone on the land. Because the wind was blowing against the disciples' course, they were straining at the oars. Jesus saw them toiling.

About the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came to the

disciples walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they thought He was a ghost and cried out. Though it was right after they had experienced the miracle of feeding the five thousand, when an unexpected situation appeared, they were seized with fear.

Jesus immediately said, *"Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."* When Jesus got into the boat, the wind ceased, and the disciples were greatly amazed. The words *"It is I"* go beyond a simple identification; they are a declaration that assures the frightened disciples of the presence of Jesus.

Mark explains that the disciples were amazed because they had not understood about the loaves and their hearts had been hardened. They had seen Jesus' power to feed so many people, but through that event they had not sufficiently realized who Jesus is.

Experiencing a miracle and realizing through that miracle the identity and the authority of Jesus are different. Through the continuing events, the disciples had to learn that Jesus is the Son of God, who rules over the created world.

9. Healing the sick at Gennesaret (verses 53–56)

When Jesus and His disciples crossed the sea, arrived at the land of Gennesaret, and anchored the boat, the people recognized Jesus at once. They ran through the surrounding region and carried the sick on their beds to wherever they heard Jesus was.

Whenever Jesus entered villages, cities, or the country, the people laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And all who touched His garment were made well.

Earlier, the people of His hometown had rejected Jesus because they thought they knew Him all too familiarly, but the

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people of Gennesaret recognized Him and eagerly brought their sick. They met the same Jesus, but according to their attitude toward Him, different results appeared.

The power of Jesus was not limited to a particular region or class. Jesus did not turn away the sick who came to Him, but healed them. This shows the compassion of Jesus, who seeks out the suffering and bestows grace on every region.

The core meaning of Mark chapter 6

First, the people of Jesus' hometown saw His wisdom and His mighty works, and yet did not believe, because of His human background and their preconceptions.

Second, even after being rejected in His hometown, Jesus did not stop His ministry, but went about the villages teaching the word.

Third, the twelve disciples received authority from Jesus and were sent out two by two, and they preached repentance, cast out demons, and healed the sick.

Fourth, John the Baptist was killed for fearlessly pointing out the king's sin, while Herod, though he knew the truth, chose evil because of desire, face-saving, and people's opinions.

Fifth, Jesus had compassion on the multitude as on sheep without a shepherd, taught them the word, and fed them full with five loaves and two fish.

Sixth, what the disciples had was small, but when it was entrusted to the hands of Jesus, it became the instrument that supplied the needs of a great many people.

Seventh, Jesus is the Son of God, who walked on the sea and made the wind cease, and He is the One who sees His disciples' hardship even from afar and comes to them.

Eighth, faith does not arise automatically from seeing

miracles; one must realize through those events who Jesus is and believe His word.

Ninth, unlike the unbelief of His hometown, the people of Gennesaret brought their sick to Jesus, and those who touched Him were made well.

To sum up in one sentence, Mark chapter 6 is the chapter in which Jesus, even while being rejected in His hometown and while John the Baptist was being killed for delivering the truth, sent out His disciples to preach the gospel, fed the shepherdless multitude with the word and with food, and, as the Son of God who rules the sea and disease, bestowed compassion and restoration on those who came to Him in faith.

2) Mark chapter 6 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Mark chapter 6 shows the people of Jesus' hometown, who knew Him only in the flesh and rejected Him; the disciples, who were sent out with the authority of Jesus to preach the gospel; John the Baptist, who was killed for testifying of the truth; Jesus, who fed the hungry multitude that was like sheep without a shepherd; and the power of Jesus, who walked on the sea. Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, no one can reach true salvation by knowing Jesus merely as a carpenter or as the son of Mary. Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior, who took on all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again. Whoever believes this fact receives the remission of all sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes a child of God. Moreover, the person who has received the remission of sins, as one who has received and

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eaten the bread of life, must share the same gospel with those who are still spiritually hungry. Just as Jesus fed a great multitude to the full with a few loaves and fish, He is Almighty God, who can abundantly spread the gospel to the whole world even through a small number of believers.

1. The hometown people who judged Jesus only by the flesh (verses 1–3)

The people of Jesus' hometown were astonished when they saw His wisdom and His mighty power. But they thought of Jesus only as the carpenter and the son of Mary whom they had known. They even cited the fact that His brothers and sisters were living among them, and rejected Him.

They could not deny His teaching and His power, but because of His familiar human background they failed to see His true identity. Seeing only the fact that Jesus had come in a human body, they did not realize that He is the Creator God and the Son of God, who came to save sinners.

Today also there are people who understand Jesus only as a great saint, an excellent teacher, or a loving figure who cared for the pitiable. But knowing Jesus only on this fleshly and historical level is not enough. We must know that He is God, who came in the body of a man, and what He accomplished to save sinners.

Jesus went to John, who represented all mankind, in order to take on the sins of all mankind. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took over all the sins of the world; carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross and judged, and He rose from death. Just as the hometown people rejected Jesus after seeing only His fleshly appearance, if a person does not know this spiritual saving work, he may profess to believe in Jesus and yet fail to receive the salvation

He accomplished.

2. Those who failed to receive God's grace through unbelief (verses 4–6)

Jesus marveled that the people of His hometown did not believe. They saw His word and His power in person, but they would not lay down their preconceptions. It was not that Jesus lacked power; it was because they neither sought grace in faith nor received it that they did not experience His great power.

Faith is not believing in a Jesus that one has fashioned out of his own thoughts. It is accepting, just as they are, the Jesus whom God testifies of through the Bible and the salvation He accomplished. When one's own thought differs from the word, he must lay down his own thought and agree with the word.

A person may say, "Jesus died on the Cross for me," and still think that sin remains in his heart. It is because, while professing to believe the death of the Cross, he does not know when and how Jesus took on those sins. The judgment Jesus received on the Cross was the judgment of all the sins of the world, which He had taken over with the baptism He received from John.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies of Jesus' saving work as one complete process. Jesus took on the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and defeated death by His resurrection. When we believe this word as it is, without dividing or altering it with our own thoughts, we receive the remission of sins.

Even after being rejected in His hometown, Jesus went about the other villages teaching. Though one person refuses the gospel, God's saving work does not stop. The word of life must keep on being preached until there are people who receive it.

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3. The twelve disciples sent out to preach repentance (verses 7–13)

Jesus sent out the twelve disciples two by two and gave them power over unclean spirits. The disciples were not sent to deliver their own thoughts and authority; they were sent to deliver the word Jesus had entrusted to them.

The core of what the disciples preached was that people should repent. True repentance, as the gospel of the water and the Spirit speaks of it, is not the act of washing away each day's sins one by one with prayers of repentance. It is acknowledging that one is a fundamental sinner before God who cannot solve his sin with his own righteousness and religious acts, and turning from wrong belief to return to the gospel Jesus completed.

True repentance includes a turnaround in the direction of one's faith. It is turning from the faith that held only to the blood of the Cross while still keeping sin in the heart, and believing the fact that Jesus took on all one's sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and saved us completely with the Cross and the resurrection.

Jesus had the disciples rely on God's provision without preparing many material things. This does not mean that preachers of every age must go without any preparation; it shows that the power of preaching the gospel does not come from a person's property or outward conditions.

The disciples were sent two by two. One who preaches the gospel needs to join hearts with those of the same faith and to help one another, rather than working alone as he pleases. The Holy Spirit unites those who have received the remission of sins and, through them, delivers the word of life to other souls.

4. The ministry of John the Baptist and the suffering he received for the truth (verses 14–29)

John the Baptist said that it was not right for Herod to have taken his brother's wife. He did not change the word of God even before the power and threats of the king, and in the end he was beheaded in prison.

Mark chapter 6 focuses on the death of John the Baptist, but his whole ministry was the work of preparing the way of Jesus. He preached repentance to the people so that they would realize they were sinners, and he did not bind people to himself but led them to Jesus. Moreover, as the representative of all mankind, he took part in the saving work by which the sins of mankind were passed on to Jesus.

After Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, John the Baptist testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. His testimony makes plain the fact that Jesus had already taken on the sin of the world before He went to the Cross.

John the Baptist, after finishing his mission, was killed for speaking the truth. This shows that doing God's work does not always guarantee safety and honor in this world. But neither a man's death nor the powers of this world can stop the plan of salvation God accomplishes.

Herod knew that John the Baptist was righteous and was perplexed when he heard his words, but he did not give up his desire or his concern for saving face. Feeling the sting of conscience upon hearing the word is not yet true repentance. One must acknowledge his sin and his wrong belief and actually return to the word of God.

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5. Jesus, who had compassion on the multitude like sheep without a shepherd (verses 30–34)

The disciples who returned from their ministry reported to Jesus what they had done and taught. Jesus told the weary disciples to go to a deserted place and rest a while. But many people arrived there first, and Jesus had compassion on them as on sheep without a shepherd.

It is not that the people of that day had no religious leaders. But they needed a true shepherd who would preach the word of life—the word that makes souls realize their sin and obtain the complete remission of sins. Outward regulations and human traditions were many, but the people did not clearly know how to be saved from all their sins.

Jesus had compassion on them and first taught them many things. The first food that solves the hunger of the soul is the word of God. Man is not a being who lives by physical food alone; he can truly live only by believing the word of life that God gives.

A true shepherd does not merely demand people's wealth and service. He makes them realize that they are sinners, and preaches the gospel—that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection—helping their souls receive the remission of sins.

Jesus did not regard the multitude as a nuisance. Seeing that their souls were starved and lost, He taught and fed them. The person who has received the remission of sins must also pity the souls that do not yet know the gospel, rather than condemning them, and must deliver to them the word of life.

6. The abundant salvation shown through five loaves and two fish (verses 35–44)

The disciples thought it impossible to feed so many people

in a deserted place. The food they had confirmed was only five loaves and two fish. But Jesus received them, blessed them, and fed to the full a multitude of five thousand men alone.

This event is a miracle in which Jesus actually fed a hungry multitude with food. There is no need to load the numbers of the five loaves and the two fish with symbolism the passage does not declare. But seen in the light of the gospel, this event, in which Jesus abundantly solved the hunger of the body, makes us think of the bread of life that gives life to the soul.

The bread of life that fills a person's soul is the salvation Jesus accomplished. Jesus took over all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, carried those sins and was judged on the Cross, shedding His blood, and rose from death. Whoever believes this gospel escapes from the condemnation of sin and from spiritual hunger, and receives the remission of sins and everlasting life.

The salvation of Jesus is not a lacking salvation that solves only part of our sins and has man fill up the rest with prayers of repentance and good deeds. Jesus took on not only original sin but all the sins man commits throughout his life, and even the sins he will commit. As He said on the Cross, *"It is finished!"* salvation has been accomplished completely.

It was not that some in the multitude ate a little and some did not eat enough; all ate and were filled. In the same way, the person who believes the gospel is not remitted of only part of his sins, but receives the complete remission of all his sins. The remission of sins is not a quantity that varies with a person's merit; it is the same perfect grace Jesus accomplished.

7. The command *"You give them something to eat"* and the responsibility of preaching the gospel (verse 37)

The disciples proposed sending the multitude to the villages

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to buy their own food, but Jesus said, *"You give them something to eat."* It was not that the disciples had the ability to feed five thousand. Jesus blessed and broke the loaves and gave them, and the disciples passed on to the multitude what they had received from Jesus.

This scene shows the principle of preaching the gospel. The person who has received the remission of sins does not himself remove another person's sins. The One who removes sin is Jesus alone. The believer takes the role of delivering the word of life he has received from Jesus to souls that are still starving.

Man-made philosophy and moral lessons cannot save a soul. The person who preaches the gospel must not speak with his own knowledge and experience at the center, but must tell how Jesus took on sins with the baptism He received from John and how He completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection.

There is no need to give up preaching the gospel because what one has seems small. The loaves and fish in the disciples' hands were hopelessly insufficient to feed the great multitude, but when they were entrusted to the hands of Jesus, they fed them all. Even if the believers' ability and number are small, when Jesus works with them, the gospel can be preached to many people.

Also, just as the disciples seated the multitude by fifties and hundreds and distributed the bread, the gospel ministry needs unity, order, and practical serving. When each person faithfully carries out the work entrusted to him, the word of life is delivered to more people.

8. The twelve baskets left over after all had eaten (verses 42–44)

After all the people had eaten their fill, the leftover bread

and fish that were gathered filled twelve baskets. The supply of Jesus was not barely enough to stave off want; it was abundant enough to feed everyone and still overflow.

The grace of the gospel likewise is not limited to the people of a particular nation or age. Since Jesus took on all the sins of mankind, whoever believes this fact receives the remission of sins. However many people there are, the salvation of Jesus does not run short.

But the fact that Jesus took on the sins of all people does not mean that all people are automatically saved. Just as food that has been prepared must still be received and eaten, a person must hear the word of the gospel and believe it with the heart. Believing is not making faith a human merit; it is receiving, without refusing, the grace Jesus has completed.

Upon the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes. The Holy Spirit confirms the faith that believes that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, and He leads that person to live as a child of God.

The food left over in twelve baskets shows that the grace and the power of Jesus are never exhausted. However many people the gospel is preached to, the grace of salvation does not diminish. Therefore the believer must enlarge his heart and share the bread of life not only with family and neighbors but with the whole world.

9. Jesus, who prayed alone and saw His disciples' hardship (verses 45–48)

After feeding the five thousand, Jesus put His disciples in the boat first and sent the multitude away. Then He went up on the mountain alone and prayed. Even after a great miracle and the attention of many people, Jesus sought fellowship with God

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the Father rather than popularity with men.

The person who has received the remission of sins also needs prayer. Prayer is not the act of repeatedly asking that sins already remitted be washed again. It is bringing thanks and needs to God in the standing of a child, entrusting one's own will to the will of God, and asking help for the preaching of the gospel and for other souls.

To pray, one must first solve the problem of sin by faith. One must honestly acknowledge his wrongs before the word, but he must not think that because of those wrongs the sins Jesus removed have come alive again. With the faith that all sins have already passed to Jesus and been judged, he must come boldly before God.

While the disciples were straining at the oars because of the headwind, Jesus was watching their distress. The disciples were in the middle of the sea and Jesus was on the land, but their situation did not escape His sight.

To the saved person also, hardships and headwinds can come while serving the gospel. At such times he must not think that God has forgotten him, but must pray and seek the help of Jesus. Prayer is the act of faith that acknowledges the limit of one's own strength and relies on Almighty God.

10. The Creator who walked on the sea, and the disciples whose hearts had grown dull (verses 48–52)

Jesus came to His disciples walking on the sea. The disciples took Him for a ghost and were terrified, but Jesus said, *"Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."* When Jesus got into the boat, the wind ceased.

Jesus, who walked on the sea and made the wind cease, is not a mere prophet or man of power; He is God, who created nature and rules it. This Almighty God put on the body of a

man, came, and saved sinners.

That Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and was judged on the Cross was not the sacrifice of one powerless human being. It is the complete salvation the Creator God accomplished when He pitied His own creatures and came Himself in the body of a man. Therefore the salvation He accomplished is sufficient to remove all the sins of mankind.

The disciples had seen the miracle of the loaves, but they had not realized its meaning, and their hearts had grown dull. Experiencing a miracle in person does not automatically make one realize who Jesus is. More important than the experience of a healed body or of material help is realizing the fact that Jesus is God and the One who saved us from all our sins.

Faith is not thinking that no wind will ever blow. It is believing the fact that even in the headwind Jesus is watching us, that He comes to us when we need Him, and that He has the authority to rule every situation.

11. Those who touched the garment of Jesus, and saving faith (verses 53–56)

The people of Gennesaret recognized Jesus and brought their sick to Him. The sick begged that they might touch even the hem of His garment, and those who touched it were healed.

This event shows that Jesus held the authority to heal disease and compassion toward the suffering. But we must not interpret it as though every disease arises from personal sin, or conclude that if one has faith, every disease of the body will surely be healed at the time one desires.

Seen in the light of the gospel, touching Jesus makes us think of the attitude of coming to Him believing that the power of salvation is in Him. Merely staying around Jesus and

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believing with the heart what He accomplished are different.

Saving faith does not end with calling on the name of Jesus or expecting miracles. It is receiving into the heart the fact that Jesus removed all one's sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who holds this faith is completely healed of the disease of sin and becomes a righteous person without sin before God.

Physical diseases are sometimes healed in this world and sometimes remain, but the remission of sins and the everlasting life given to the person who believes the gospel do not change. Therefore the most fundamental purpose of believing in Jesus is not to gain only health and material blessing in this world, but to be saved from all sins and live with God forever.

The core meaning of Mark chapter 6 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, because the people of His hometown judged Jesus only as the carpenter and the son of Mary, they failed to realize the spiritual fact that He is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind.

Second, true faith is not putting forward human preconceptions and one's own thoughts, but accepting as it is the word of God concerning who Jesus is and what salvation He accomplished.

Third, true repentance is not washing sins away little by little with repeated prayers of repentance, but acknowledging one's sinfulness and inability, and turning from wrong belief to return to the completed gospel.

Fourth, John the Baptist preached repentance and led people to Jesus, took part, as the representative of all mankind, in the saving work by which Jesus took on the sin of the world, and afterward was killed testifying of the truth.

Fifth, the bread of life is the word of the salvation that Jesus completed by taking on all sins with the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising again.

Sixth, the salvation of Jesus abundantly and completely removes all the sins of the one who believes, and whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God.

Seventh, as the words *"You give them something to eat"* teach, the person who has received the remission of sins must pass on the bread of life he received from Jesus to others who are spiritually starving.

Eighth, the number of the disciples and the food they had were very small, but Jesus used them to feed a great multitude; so the fruit of preaching the gospel depends on the power of God rather than on human scale.

Ninth, the prayer of the person who has received the remission of sins is not an act for washing sins again, but the fellowship of faith in which, as a child of God, he brings thanks and needs and asks help for the preaching of the gospel and for other souls.

Tenth, Jesus is the Creator God, who walked on the sea and made the wind cease, and the saved person must believe and rely on His presence and His authority even in the headwinds of life.

To sum up in one sentence, Mark chapter 6 shows that the person who does not judge Jesus by the flesh but believes in Him as the Son of God and the Savior, who removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and that he must share that bread of life with the whole world and live believing and praying to the almighty Jesus in every headwind of life. ✉

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Mark Chapter 6

Jesus Christ, who bestows compassion and life even amid rejection

Introduction

Mark chapter 6 is the chapter in which Jesus, rejected in His hometown, sent out the twelve disciples to preach the gospel; in which the injustice and stubbornness of the world were exposed in the death of John the Baptist; and in which Jesus revealed His power by feeding the five thousand and walking on the sea. Despite people's unbelief and opposition, the saving work of Jesus did not stop.

The people of His hometown saw the word and the power of Jesus, and yet, looking only at His familiar background, they did not believe. The disciples, by contrast, had to go forward relying not on their own ability and possessions but on the word and the authority they had received from the Lord. Herod heard the truth and yet, unable to give up his desire or his concern for saving face, let John the Baptist be put to death. This shows that hearing the word alone is not enough; one must turn from his own thoughts and sins and receive the truth.

Jesus had compassion on the multitude, who were like sheep without a shepherd, taught them the word, and then fed them full with the loaves and fish. He also revealed that He is the Creator God by walking on the sea and making the wind cease. Yet the disciples, not having realized the meaning of the

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miracle they had just seen, were afraid. More important than seeing many signs is rightly knowing the Jesus whom those signs testify of.

Jesus took on the sins of all people with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and opened the way of everlasting life by rising again. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and is used in the work of sharing with other souls the food of life he has received. This chapter leads us to rely on the word of the Lord even amid rejection and hardship, and to pity starving souls and preach the gospel to them.

Though they saw His wisdom and mighty works, the people of His hometown judged Jesus to be only the familiar carpenter and rejected the word of life

"Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?' So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.' Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief.

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Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching" (Mark 6:1–6).

After raising Jairus's daughter, Jesus went with His disciples to His hometown. When He taught the word in the synagogue on the Sabbath, many people were astonished at His wisdom. They also knew the rumors of the mighty works performed by His hands, and so they could not call Him a merely ordinary man.

They asked, *"Where did this Man get these things?"* but they did not realize that the source of that wisdom and power was God. Rather than trying to recognize His true identity through His word, they judged Him on the basis of the occupation and the family relations they knew. Being astonished at the word and laying down one's own thoughts to believe are two different things.

To the people of His hometown, Jesus was the son of Mary and the carpenter they had watched from His childhood. They knew His brothers and His sisters as well. But knowing much human information about Jesus did not lead them to the faith that knows Him rightly. Familiarity and preconception rather kept them from recognizing the Son of God.

The fact that Jesus worked as a carpenter shows that He is true man, who came in an actual body. He grew, worked, and experienced weariness as we do, yet He was without sin. At the same time, Jesus is the eternal Son of God, the Christ who came to save sinners. The people of His hometown saw only His humanity and would not acknowledge His deity.

People can look first at a messenger's appearance and origin, his schooling and social position, before they look at the word of God. They may readily accept what a famous person says, while taking lightly what is delivered by someone they know closely or who looks ordinary. But the word must be

discerned by whether it agrees with the Bible, not by the conditions of the messenger. Conversely, we must not unconditionally accept anyone who claims his own words to be the word of God.

Jesus said that a prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house. Those near him, on the ground that they know the prophet's daily life and past, may treat lightly even the word delivered through him. Since this difficulty can arise also when we preach the gospel to our families, we should show them the accurate gospel and a changed life with patience, rather than trying to force belief through argument.

The words *"Now He could do no mighty work there"* do not mean that unbelief robbed Jesus of His power. Even there Jesus healed a few sick people. But He did not perform miracles like a show to satisfy the curiosity of those who stubbornly refused Him. Miracles were signs to lead people to believe that He is the Son of God, not spectacles.

God's power is not something that comes into being only when people believe in it. Yet even the salvation that has been completed does not become a benefit to the person who refuses it. The people of Nazareth heard His wisdom and knew the evidence of His power, but they did not abandon their own thinking. So Jesus said, *"And He marveled because of their unbelief."*

Today also a person may have heard of the birth, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus for so long that they are familiar, and still not know how his own sins were solved. Church life and Bible knowledge alone do not save. One must not stop at holding knowledge about Jesus, but must believe with the heart the salvation He accomplished for him.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon

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His own body the sins of all the people of the world. And carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the punishment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again on the third day, defeating sin and death.

The baptism He received from John the Baptist and the Cross are one saving work that cannot be separated. Jesus took on sins with His baptism and paid the price of those sins on the Cross. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God.

A person may think he knows the Cross and yet refuse the word that all his sins passed to Jesus through the baptism He received from John. He may also add repeated repentance and good deeds as conditions for the remission of sins. But faith is not choosing only the parts that fit one's tradition and thought; it is accepting the salvation God accomplished, just as the word says.

Even after being rejected in His hometown, Jesus did not give up His ministry, but went about all the villages teaching. Though refused in one region, the power of the gospel did not disappear. The one who preaches the gospel must likewise not lose heart at the refusal of those near him, but pray and keep delivering the word with love and patience.

This section teaches us not to judge Jesus by outward appearance and human background. To the people of Nazareth He was a familiar carpenter, but in reality He was the Son of God, who rules the wind and the sea and raises the dead. The person who humbly believes the gospel He accomplished with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection enjoys the remission of sins and the grace of the Holy Spirit; but the person who rejects Jesus in the pride of already knowing Him well fails to obtain that grace even

though the Savior is near.

Despite His hometown's rejection, Jesus did not stop preaching the gospel, but sent out the twelve disciples to preach repentance and the kingdom of God

"And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching. And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts— but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. Also He said to them, 'In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!' So they went out and preached that people should repent. And they cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed them" (Mark 6:6–13).

The people of Nazareth saw the wisdom and the mighty works of Jesus, and yet judged Him to be only the familiar carpenter and rejected Him. But Jesus did not stop preaching the gospel because of the unbelief of one region. Rather, He went about all the villages teaching, and even sent out His disciples so that more people might hear the word. Though there are people who refuse the gospel, God's plan of salvation does not stop.

Jesus first called the twelve disciples and then sent them. A

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preacher of the gospel is not a person who steps forward on his own out of his own thoughts and ambitions, but a person who receives the Lord's calling and delivers His will. The source of the word the disciples would preach and the authority they would exercise was not in themselves either. They went out carrying what Jesus had entrusted and given to them.

Sending the disciples two by two was His wisdom, so that they could help and protect each other and not fall into one man's arbitrariness. Since preaching the gospel brings not only joy but also rejection and danger, coworkers can hold up one another's faith. Also, by two witnessing together, the credibility of their word could be established. The work of God is not a work of exalting an individual's honor, but of cooperating to accomplish the Lord's will.

Jesus gave the disciples power over unclean spirits. This authority was not an ability originally in the disciples, but authority received from Jesus. Therefore they could not boast of their own names or spiritual power. Neither should anyone today claim, on the basis of this command, that he automatically holds the same authority, or use it to frighten people. All spiritual ministry must be carried out under the sovereignty of Jesus Christ and the word of the Bible.

Jesus told them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in their belts—and to wear sandals but not to put on two tunics. This was a command that in this sending the disciples should not rely on many provisions and possessions, but on the Lord who sent them and on the supply God would prepare. It also carries the sense that, because of the urgency of preaching the gospel, they should travel light and not delay.

We must not apply this word as an absolute rule that preachers of every age must travel without money or a change

of clothes. At other times Jesus also told His disciples to prepare what they needed. The important principle is not to put material things before the gospel, not to postpone the mission until every condition is satisfied, and to rely on God.

Serving the gospel does actually require time, money, and labor. The person who has received the remission of sins should be able to pity the souls that have not yet heard the gospel and gladly share what he has, rather than seeking to serve the Lord only with what remains after filling his own needs. But poverty or sacrifice in itself does not make a person more righteous. Neither must devotion be made a condition of salvation or a ground of self-boasting.

Jesus told them, whatever house they entered, to stay in that house until they left the region. It means not to keep moving from house to house in search of more comfortable and better hospitality. A preacher of the gospel must not discriminate between people according to the level of their hospitality, or make the ministry an opportunity for personal gain. He should be content with what is given and concentrate on delivering the word.

This word also shows that those who receive the gospel may serve the preacher in love and take part in the ministry. The one who sends and the one who goes labor together in the same gospel from different positions. But the preacher must not extort offerings or lodging, and the one who provides help must not build his own righteousness on it. All serving must be done willingly, out of thanksgiving for the salvation already received.

If any place would not receive them or hear them, He told them to shake off the dust under their feet when they left, as a testimony. This does not mean repaying insult or pouring out curses. It was a solemn act showing that the responsibility for

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stubbornly refusing the gospel, after it had been clearly delivered, lay with the hearers.

The preacher does not need to carry the burden of making every person believe by his own strength. He must deliver the gospel fully, with love and patience, but he cannot keep up an endless argument with someone who refuses to the end. Rather than staying bound to one person's refusal, he must go on to other souls who are waiting for the word. Yet he must not hastily condemn the other, or give up merely because someone does not listen for a little while.

The disciples went out and preached that people should repent. Repentance does not mean only the emotion of regretting one's wrongs with tears. It is turning the heart that had left God and followed its own thoughts and sins, acknowledging the word of God, and facing toward the Savior. Only when a person admits that he is a sinner and that he cannot escape sin and judgment by his own deeds can he receive the true gospel.

Repeating many prayers of repentance does not wash away sins. If a person has realized his sin and yet still clings to his own merit and religious zeal, he has not yet fully turned onto the way of salvation. True repentance must go as far as laying down one's own righteousness and believing in Jesus Christ, whom God sent, and in the salvation He completed.

The word the disciples preached at this time was the news that the kingdom of God had drawn near with the coming of Jesus. Since the Cross and the resurrection of Jesus had not yet taken place, we cannot conclude that they were already preaching, from that time, all the contents of the completed gospel that we preach today. Their ministry was the work of preparing people to turn from sin, believe in Jesus, and receive the salvation He would accomplish.

Jesus came in the flesh to save sinners, and with the baptism He received from John He took upon His own body all the sins of the world. Carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the punishment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again on the third day, completing salvation. Today's preacher of the gospel must clearly deliver this whole salvation, already completed.

The baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection are the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which cannot be separated from one another. Whoever believes with the heart the fact that Jesus took on all sins with His baptism and paid their price on the Cross receives the remission of all sins once and for all. And he receives the Holy Spirit as a gift and becomes a child of God. The power of the gospel lies not in the preacher's eloquence but in this word of salvation God has accomplished.

The disciples cast out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. These works were signs showing that the authority Jesus gave was really with them and that the kingdom of God was drawing near. They also revealed the mercy of God, who pities those who suffer under demons and disease.

We must not understand the anointing of the sick with oil to mean that the oil itself held mysterious healing power. The power of healing was with God. Neither must we conclude that every disease is the work of demons. The sick today should pray in faith and also receive proper medical examination and treatment, entrusting the outcome and the timing of healing to the will of God.

More fundamental than the signs of casting out demons and healing diseases is the salvation of the remission of sins. Even if the body is healed, a person dies someday; but the person

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who receives the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit gains everlasting life. The preacher must not try to gather people with miracles and phenomena, but must accurately deliver how a sinner believes the righteousness of God and is born again.

The word that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John and ended the judgment on the Cross is not a religious commodity to be sold for money. Since salvation is a grace received freely, the gospel too must be preached without regard to people's standing or wealth. Yet this does not mean that the gospel ministry costs no labor or expense, so believers can gladly labor together with prayer, material support, and service.

This section teaches that preaching the gospel is not a work done by one's personal ability, but a mission carried out together, relying on the Lord's calling and authority. The preacher must not covet money and hospitality but deliver the word with a simple heart, and the hearer must examine whether the word is the truth rather than the outward conditions of the messenger.

Jesus was not discouraged by the unbelief of His hometown, but went from village to village, and He widened the road of gospel preaching by sending out His disciples. Today the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit must likewise not stop because of the refusal of those near him or his own lacking circumstances. He must accurately deliver the salvation accomplished through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, entrust the results to God, and serve the gospel faithfully together with the church and his coworkers.

Herod counted John the Baptist's rebuke right and yet did not repent, and in the end he gave in to face-saving and desire and killed a righteous man

"Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, 'John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.' Others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.' But when Herod heard, he said, 'This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!' For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, 'Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.' He also swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.' So she went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask?' And she said, 'The head of John the Baptist!' Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he

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went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb" (Mark 6:14–29).

When Jesus sent out the twelve disciples and they preached repentance and healed the sick, the name of Jesus became widely known. People guessed that Jesus was Elijah or a figure like one of the prophets of old, but they did not know that He is the Son of God and the promised Christ. If a person sees amazing power and yet does not rightly know the true identity of Jesus, he cannot arrive at saving faith.

When Herod heard the news of Jesus, he thought that John the Baptist, whom he had killed, had risen. This was not faith in the risen Lord but fear born of guilt. Since he knew in his conscience that killing John had been wrong, when he heard the rumor of Jesus' power, he felt as though the sin he had hidden away had come back to find him.

Here Mark goes back in time and explains how John the Baptist came to die. Herod had taken Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. John the Baptist, unafraid of the king's power and revenge, said plainly, *"It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."* The word of God does not judge king and people by two different standards.

John the Baptist's rebuke was not meant to insult Herod or to settle a private grudge. It was the prophet's mission of declaring sin to be sin so that Herod would turn. The purpose of pointing out sin is not to shame or dominate a person, but to lead him to acknowledge his wrong and seek the mercy and the salvation of God.

Herodias, hearing John's rebuke, did not acknowledge her sin but counted John an enemy. When the word of truth blocks a person's desire, instead of forsaking the sin he may hate the

word and the one who delivered it. When we are rebuked, rather than flaring up at once, we should examine whether the word agrees with the Bible, and if there is wrong, turn from it before God.

Herod's attitude was more complicated. He knew John to be a just and holy man, feared him, and protected him; and when he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet heard him gladly. Herod knew that John was a true man of God and felt the prick of conscience at his words, but he did not break off the sinful relationship.

Enjoying listening to the word, or feeling distressed at a sermon, does not complete repentance. If a person acknowledges his sin and still keeps holding it, he gains no benefit from having heard the word. Herod lingered long between the truth and his sin, and meanwhile Herodias's grudge waited for a chance to kill John. Postponed repentance can give sin time to grow into greater evil.

At Herod's birthday feast his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee were gathered. In a place filled with power, wine, merriment, and people's eyes, Herod was delighted at the dancing of Herodias's daughter. Intoxicated with the mood, he said he would give her whatever she wished, and rashly swore to give even up to half of his kingdom.

A person may make promises he cannot bear, to win momentary pleasure and the cheers of the crowd. Having sworn does not mean that an unrighteous thing must be carried out. If the content of a promise goes against the will of God, it is right to admit the fault and cancel it. To murder under the pretext of keeping a wrong oath was not faithfulness but another sin.

Herodias's daughter asked her mother what she should request, and Herodias told her to ask for the head of John the

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Baptist. More than wealth or position, she wanted to remove the man who had pointed out her sin. It shows how cruel an end the heart that loves sin and hates rebuke can reach.

The girl hurried in to the king and demanded that the head of John the Baptist be given her at once on a platter. In this demand appears the cruelty that would give no time for second thoughts. Herod was exceedingly sorry, but for fear of losing face before his guests he did not refuse. He counted the words he had spoken and people's esteem more important than the conscience that said the righteous man must live.

Herod held the power of a king, but in reality he was a slave dragged about by desire, face-saving, and the eyes of those around him. When a person knows that sin is wrong and yet fears men, he can choose a greater sin. True courage is not keeping a wrong word to the end; it is stopping the sin and turning to the right way, even if one is put to shame before people.

In the end the executioner beheaded John in prison, and his head was carried on a platter through Herodias's daughter to her mother. The feast turned into a place where life was taken. The passage solemnly shows that when human pleasure, grudges, and vanity combine, they can sacrifice even the life of a righteous man.

That John the Baptist died does not mean his mission failed. He prepared the way of Christ, preached repentance to the people, and testified that Jesus is the Son of God, who takes away the sin of the world. He also carried out the crucial mission of having the sins of mankind passed on to Jesus through the baptism Jesus received from him. After finishing the work entrusted to him, he did not bend the truth even at the cost of death.

Herod may have thought that if he killed John, the

uncomfortable rebuke would also disappear. But when he heard the news of Jesus, his conscience shook with even greater fear. A person can shut the mouth of the one who delivers the truth, but he cannot erase the word of God and the witness of his own conscience. The solution of sin lies not in hiding or forgetting it, but in turning to God.

Repentance does not mean only being tormented by guilt or fearing punishment. Herod feared and was distressed, but he did not forsake his sin and come to the Lord. True repentance is acknowledging that God's judgment is right, laying down one's own righteousness and sin, and then believing in Jesus Christ, who has removed sin.

John the Baptist prepared the way that leads sinners to the Savior. Jesus, who had no sin, took upon His own body all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place all the punishment of sin, and He was buried and rose again on the third day.

The baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection are one complete salvation God has accomplished. A sinner cannot wash away his sins with the emotion of regretting them or with repeated prayers of repentance. He must believe with the heart the fact that Jesus took over all his sins with His baptism and paid the price of those sins in full on the Cross.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not take sin lightly. For he knows that all his sins passed to Jesus and that because of those sins the Lord received the judgment of the Cross. Whoever believes the salvation accomplished through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy

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Spirit as a gift. And the Holy Spirit leads the believer to live according to the word of God without deceiving his conscience.

This section teaches us not to stop at being perplexed after hearing the word. Herod acknowledged John as righteous and heard him gladly, but he did not forsake his sin. In the end, fearing people's eyes, he killed the righteous man he had been protecting. A heart that knows and yet does not obey can grow more hardened as time passes.

The person who preaches the gospel needs boldness to call sin sin, as John the Baptist did, but his purpose and method must also befit the gospel. A rebuke meant to attack a person or to make oneself look righteous cannot lead a soul to the Lord. Remembering one's own sinfulness and the grace received, he must deliver the truth in love and entrust the results and the danger of retaliation to God.

Herod cut off the head of John the Baptist, but he could not remove the truth John had testified. Jesus completed the salvation of sinners with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Now, instead of postponing the gospel in the fear of conscience as Herod did, everyone must acknowledge his sins, believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, and receive the remission of sins and the life of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus taught the multitude, who were like sheep without a shepherd, with the word, and fed them full with the loaves and the fish

"Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, 'Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place

and rest a while.' For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.' But He answered and said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' And they said to Him, 'Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?' But He said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and see.' And when they found out they said, 'Five, and two fish.' Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men" (Mark 6:30–44).

The twelve disciples who had been sent out returned to Jesus and reported in detail what they had done and taught. The word "apostle" carries the meaning of one who is sent. They were not independent men of power working in their own names, but men sent out with authority and the word received from Jesus; so they had to report the results of their ministry to

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the Lord as well.

The person who preaches the gospel must likewise review everything before the Lord, rather than boasting of his achievements or hiding his failures. He must examine not only how much he has done but what gospel he has taught. However zealous he may be, if he has delivered something different from the word of God, it cannot be called a right ministry.

Jesus told the disciples, who had had no time even to eat, to go to a deserted place and rest a while. The Lord knows that the human body is a being that needs rest and food. We must not exhaust the body irresponsibly on the ground of serving the gospel, nor condemn a person who rests as having no faith. Rest is not abandoning the mission; it is the order needed to serve again in health.

But the multitude who saw the disciples leaving by boat ran on foot from many towns and arrived first. The planned rest did not come about as intended. Jesus did not regard the multitude as troublesome intruders, but looked at their situation. He showed the balance of respecting needed rest while not turning away from desperate souls before His eyes.

Jesus saw the great multitude and had compassion on them, counting them as sheep without a shepherd. Without a shepherd, sheep cannot find the way or a place to feed, and can hardly protect themselves from danger. The multitude had religious leaders, but they needed a true shepherd who would guide them rightly with the word of life and save them from sin.

The compassion of Jesus did not stay in mere emotion. He first taught the multitude many things. Man needs bodily food, but above all he needs the word of life, which makes him know his sin and God’s salvation. What a soul drawn away by false teaching needs first is to hear the truth accurately.

When the day grew late, the disciples said to send the

multitude away to the villages so that each might buy something to eat. Since there were many people in a deserted place and the hour was late, it was a realistic judgment. But Jesus said, *"You give them something to eat."* He did not let them turn the multitude's need over to others, but had the disciples take part in the Lord's compassion.

The disciples asked whether they should buy two hundred denarii worth of bread. Since one denarius was about a laborer's daily wage, it was a great sum they could hardly bear. They calculated the amount needed and their own lacking resources, but they failed to include in the calculation the power of Jesus, who was with them.

Rather than rebuking them for what they did not have, Jesus told them to go and see how many loaves they had now. What the disciples confirmed was only five loaves and two fish. It was an amount that seemed meaningless for feeding five thousand, but when it was offered into the hands of Jesus, it became food that all the people ate.

This word is not a promise that if we offer something small we will surely become materially rich. Nor does it mean that if we have faith, no preparation or calculation is needed at all. The disciples actually confirmed what they had and seated the multitude in order. Faith is not denying reality; it is acknowledging our lacking reality while relying on the power and the will of the Lord.

Jesus had the people sit down in groups of hundreds and of fifties on the green grass. He did not herd the great multitude together in disorder, but set order so that each person could receive the food. The work of God is accomplished through responsible preparation and cooperation while relying on the Holy Spirit.

Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to

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heaven, blessed them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples. The One who multiplied the food was Jesus, and the disciples delivered to the people what they received from the Lord. In the gospel ministry also, the One who gives life is the Lord, and the church and the preacher are channels who share the word of the salvation He accomplished.

While the disciples were distributing, the bread and the fish did not run short. All the people did not merely taste a little; they all ate and were filled. This event is a miracle that actually happened in a deserted place, and it shows that Jesus is the Creator and the true Shepherd who feeds His people. Man's insufficiency cannot limit the Lord's saving power.

The leftover fragments and fish filled twelve baskets. The Lord's supply was not barely enough to escape want; it was abundant enough to feed everyone and overflow. At the same time, the fact that the leftovers were gathered up also teaches that we must not waste what God has given on the pretext of abundant grace.

Those who ate the loaves were five thousand men alone. This miracle of feeding so many shows that the power of Jesus does not reach only a few special people. But we must not turn this event into a promise of material prosperity, that whoever believes in Jesus will always have all the food and wealth he wants. Even those who ate the bread of the body grew hungry again and died someday.

The five loaves and two fish show the Lord's love that cares for the needs of the body, and at the same time they make us think of the food of life that gives life to the soul. However much worldly wealth, knowledge, and pleasure a person may have, if his sin is not solved he cannot escape spiritual hunger. The true food of the soul is Jesus Christ, who saved sinners, and His word.

To give sinners everlasting life, Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving all the punishment in our place, and He was buried and rose again on the third day, completing salvation.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit, made up of the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, is not a limited food for one nation or class. Since Jesus took on the sins of all people, whoever believes this word with the heart receives the remission of all sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and gains everlasting life.

Just as the power that multiplied the bread did not come from the disciples, the power that causes a sinner to be born again does not come from the preacher's eloquence or the size of the church. The power is in the gospel itself, which Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. The church must share this food of life accurately, without mixing in other things.

The food left over in twelve full baskets shows that the Lord's grace is not insufficient to save all people. Yet this does not mean that everyone is automatically saved. Just as the multitude received and ate the bread the disciples distributed, the sinner enjoys the benefit of that salvation when he receives the preached gospel into his heart and believes it.

The words "*You give them something to eat*" challenge today's believers also not to turn away from souls. We have no power to save anyone, but we can share the gospel of life we have already received. Even if the time, money, and talents we hold look small, when we entrust them to the Lord and serve the gospel, God can use them where they are needed.

The church must not speak only of spiritual food while

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ignoring the real suffering of neighbors who are hungry and sick. Jesus taught the multitude and then gave them actual food as well. Keeping the gospel at the very center, while caring in love for those in hard circumstances and sharing what help we can, is taking part in the Lord's compassion.

But if we only serve and give relief and do not preach the gospel of the remission of sins, we cannot fill man's most fundamental need. Together with solving the hunger of the body, we must preach Jesus, who removed all sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. What gives a person everlasting life is not human good deeds but the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This section shows together that the disciple who has labored needs rest, and that in the world there are many souls waiting for the word of life. The believer must not exhaust himself by overtrusting his own strength, but must rest in the Lord, and again serve others with the word and the strength received from the Lord.

Jesus, who had compassion on us who were like sheep without a shepherd, did not only give the food of the body; He gave His own body and opened the way of everlasting life. The person who believes the gospel completed by the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection is saved from sin and judgment and finds fullness in the Holy Spirit. And he must live as the Lord's disciple, sharing the food of life he has received with his family, his neighbors, and all peoples.

Jesus saw His disciples straining at rowing against the wind, came to them walking on the sea, and revealed that He is the almighty Savior

"Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray. Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by. And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out; for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, 'Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.' Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened" (Mark 6:45–52).

In the previous section Jesus fed a great multitude to the full with five loaves and two fish. Right afterward, Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead to Bethsaida, while He remained and sent the multitude away. The parallel record of the Gospel of John shows that the crowd intended to take Jesus by force and make Him king because of this sign. But Jesus had not come to be enthroned as a political king who fills people's fleshly needs. He came, according to the will of God, to save sinners from sin and judgment. We may see in His hurrying the disciples away His intent to keep them from being swept up in the fervor over the loaves.

After sending the multitude away, Jesus went up on the

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mountain alone and prayed. Even after the great sign of feeding so many, He did not linger enjoying people's cheers or displaying His power. He sought the Father's will and communed with Him. Jesus is God in essence, and at the same time, as the Son of God come in the flesh, He obeyed the Father's will completely. This teaches us, who so easily exalt our own merit after accomplishing something great, that in times of success we must humble our hearts before God all the more.

The disciples obeyed the command of Jesus and got into the boat, but they soon met a contrary wind. It was not a hardship that arose because they had chosen a wrong path. Even on the road the Lord has told us to take, headwinds can blow. Therefore we must not conclude, merely because we meet affliction in the life of faith, that we have left the will of God. What matters is not whether there is wind, but whether in that situation we keep believing the Lord's word and keep going on the way entrusted to us.

The boat was in the middle of the sea and Jesus was alone on the land, but the Lord was watching them *"straining at rowing, for the wind was against them."* To the disciples' eyes Jesus was not visible, and help must have seemed delayed. But Jesus knew their position, their toil, and their fear. That God is unseen does not mean He has departed, and that the answer does not come at once does not mean He is looking away. The Lord knows the headwinds His people endure and comes to them at the fittest time.

About the fourth watch of the night, when the deep night was passing and dawn was near, Jesus came to the disciples walking on the sea. This is not merely a marvelous feat of walking on water. It is a sign in which the Creator, who made the sea and the wind, showed His authority—not subject to

nature but ruling it. If the five loaves and two fish showed the Creator's power to feed many with little food, His walking on the sea shows that even the waves that press in like chaos and the terror of death are under His feet. Jesus, who came to rescue His disciples, is not a mere teacher or wonder-working prophet, but the almighty Son of God.

The passage records that Jesus came to them and *"would have passed them by."* This can hardly be understood only as meaning that He intended to leave them behind and simply pass on. Jesus had already seen them straining at the oars and had come to them. He revealed Himself so that they would recognize Him and believe, but they mistook the Lord coming on the sea for a ghost and cried out. When fear seizes us, we can mistake even the Lord who comes to save us for a new danger.

Jesus spoke at once to the terrified disciples. The words *"Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid"* make us look first not at the situation but at the One speaking. The wind had not yet ceased, but because Jesus was with them, a ground for peace had come. The peace of faith does not come from every problem disappearing first; it comes from believing who the Lord who saved me is, and that He knows me even now. A saint is not a person who never feels fear, but a person who, even in fear, hears the Lord's word again and relies on Him.

When Jesus got into the boat, the wind ceased, and the disciples were exceedingly amazed in their hearts. The Lord, who had calmed the storm with a word in Mark chapter 4, here also showed His authority over nature. But this event is not a promise that for believers the storm always vanishes at once and everything unfolds as they wish. The Lord sometimes removes the problem, and sometimes gives strength to pass through it. What the passage certainly teaches is that no wind

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lies outside the authority of Jesus, and that He never forgets His people.

Mark explains the reason the disciples were so amazed: *"they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened."* Only hours before, they had seen the sign of Jesus multiplying the loaves and had distributed that bread to the multitude with their own hands. Yet they failed to receive that sign as a word revealing who Jesus is. They were astonished at the result of the miracle, but they did not deeply realize that the One who did it is the Creator God and the Lord of life. And so, when the same Lord came to them on the sea, they did not recognize Him in faith but mistook Him for a ghost.

A hardened heart does not mean only a lack of knowledge or dull feelings. It is the state of seeing what God has done and still failing to believe with the heart the Jesus Christ whom that work testifies of. A person may read much Scripture and experience miracles and still know Jesus only as One who solves the problems of the flesh. Signs are not the goal of faith in themselves; they point to the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ who saves sinners. If we look only at the bread, or seek only the result of the storm ceasing, we miss the Lord who stands at the center of the sign.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit must also be received from this standpoint. There is no need to force the event of walking on the sea into a direct parable of Jesus' baptism. This sign makes plain that the One who rules the water and the wind is the very God who came to save sinners. That almighty Son of God put on the body of a man and took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John; carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment of sin in our place. And He was buried and rose

again on the third day, defeating the power of sin and death.

Therefore salvation is not a matter of man crossing the sea of sin by his own effort. Just as the disciples could not master the situation by rowing however hard against the contrary wind, the sinner cannot remove his own sins by piling up good deeds, law-keeping, and prayers of repentance. When he believes with the heart the word that Jesus completed salvation with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, he receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit causes the born-again heart to believe that Jesus is true God and the perfect Savior, and leads it to rely on the word of the gospel in every hardship.

This word also warns that even a person who has received the remission of sins can grow dull in heart. If yesterday's grace is not joined to today's faith, he can be overwhelmed with fear again before a new headwind. Therefore the saint must keep remembering how God saved him through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and go over the grace bestowed so far in the light of the word. And when he meets hardship, he must not bury himself only in rowing with his own strength, but rely on the Lord in prayer.

This section shows that even when Jesus seems far away, He is watching His people's distress, and that He is the almighty Savior, who crosses what man cannot cross and comes to us. The believer must look not at the size of the storm but at who it is that has come into the boat. When we realize the identity of Jesus revealed through the loaves and the walking on the sea, and firmly believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit by which He took on and completely removed all our sins, we can guard our hearts in fear with the words *"Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."*

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The people of Gennesaret recognized Jesus and brought the sick to Him, and all who came believing in the Lord's power were made well

"When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized Him, ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that they might just touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well" (Mark 6:53–56).

Jesus and His disciples passed through the fierce wind and arrived at the land of Gennesaret. In the previous section the disciples had seen Jesus coming on the sea and mistaken Him for a ghost. Though they had seen the sign of the loaves multiplied, they had not deeply realized the identity and the power of Jesus revealed through it. But the people of Gennesaret who saw Jesus come off the boat recognized Him at once. What matters here is not only the fact that they recognized Him with their eyes. They believed that Jesus had the power to heal the sick, and they began to act at once.

As soon as they recognized Jesus, the people ran through the whole surrounding region. They did not try to receive His help for themselves alone, but made known to those around them the news that Jesus had come. Whenever they heard where He was, they carried the sick there on their beds. Since there were no means of transport or medical facilities like today's, carrying an immobile patient on his bed took great labor. Yet they did not give up because of the weight of the sick or the distance. They had the trust that if they only brought

them to Jesus, they would receive help.

This scene shows that true faith does not stop at information or words. Hearing the rumor that Jesus is a man of power is one thing; actually carrying a sick man to Him is another. Faith does not mean that man's deed pays the price of salvation; it means that the heart which has received God's word as true responds concretely. Because the people of Gennesaret relied on Jesus, they ran and spread the news, shouldered the heavy beds, and laid the sick before Him.

Their laying the sick in the marketplaces does not mean they treated the sick like goods. In those days the marketplace was not only a place of trade but the central space of town and city where people gathered and news was shared. They were making it possible for as many of the sick as possible to come near Jesus where He passed. The record that the same thing happened wherever He entered—village, city, or country—shows that His compassion and power were not confined to any place or class.

The people begged that the sick might touch even "*the hem of His garment.*" This calls to mind the woman who had suffered from the flow of blood for twelve years and was healed by touching His garment. They did not limit Jesus' power, as if it could work only when He laid His hands on each person. They believed His power was so great that even touching the hem of His garment would heal. And the passage testifies that all who touched it in that faith were made well.

But we must not understand this as though the cloth of Jesus' garment itself held mysterious power. The garment was no amulet or sacred object; the One who healed the sick was Jesus. Touching the hem of His garment was the expression of faith that revealed whom they were relying on. The power came not from the act of touching, but from the Son of God,

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Jesus Christ, to whom they came believing. Therefore no one today should imitate this event and claim that some object or some person's body holds special healing power, or use such claims to make money.

The words *"And as many as touched Him were made well"* mean that within this event, all the sick who came to Jesus were actually healed. There was no lack in His power, and no disease could defeat His authority. This sign reveals that Jesus is the Creator, who made life and the body, and that He came to this earth as the Savior promised in the Old Testament. In His not turning away the sick but making them whole, the Lord's heart that pities the suffering is also revealed.

Yet we must not turn this verse into a universal promise that the believer will always be healed of every disease at once in this world. During His public life Jesus healed many sick people as signs revealing that He is the Christ. Today also God can heal according to His will, so the saint may pray in faith. At the same time, receiving proper examination and treatment is using the help God has allowed. We must not condemn a person as faithless because healing is delayed, or rashly attribute the responsibility of sin to the sick.

We must also distinguish bodily healing from the everlasting remission of sins. The bodies of those healed at Gennesaret recovered health, but one day they had to grow old and die again. Bodily healing is a sign that displays the power of Jesus, but it did not in itself solve the problem of sin, judgment, and everlasting death. The ultimate purpose of the signs Jesus performed is to make people believe who He is and why He came, not to leave them at the level of fleshly benefit.

Jesus did not come only to heal sick bodies; He is the Son of God, who came to save all mankind, who would die in sin. Jesus, who had no sin, took upon His own body all the sins of

the world with the baptism He received from John. And carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the punishment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again on the third day, defeating sin and death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which saves sinners completely.

Just as the sick had to come to Jesus even leaning on the help of others, the sinner must acknowledge that he cannot solve his sin with his own strength and righteousness, and must believe the salvation Jesus accomplished. But just as the labor of those who carried the beds did not pay the price of the healing, man's prayers of repentance, good deeds, and religious zeal are not the price of the remission of sins. Salvation was already completed by the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. By believing this gospel with the heart, a person receives the remission of all sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is born again.

The way the people of Gennesaret brought the sick to Jesus also shows how a person who knows the gospel should serve other souls. As they carried on his bed the sick man who could not move by himself, we must first draw near to those who do not know the gospel and let them hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Rather than blaming the person pressed down by sin or trying to change him by force, we must help him with love and patience so that he may hear and believe the salvation Jesus accomplished. The One who saves a soul from sin is not the preacher's ability or persuasion but Jesus Christ.

Also, the people brought the sick as soon as they heard where Jesus was. They did not wait for perfect conditions to be arranged. When there was an opportunity to come to the Lord, they did not delay. We too, when we hear the word of the

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gospel, must not put it off with excuses of our own thoughts and circumstances. Only, we must not stop at seeking Jesus for bodily healing, but believe that He is the perfect Savior, who has already taken on all our sins and received their judgment in our place.

This section teaches what kind of faith truly recognizes Jesus. The people of Gennesaret recognized Him and came to Him, bringing with them the neighbors who needed help. Jesus, who made whole those who touched the hem of His garment, is still Almighty God and the Savior of sinners. Therefore the believer should seek the Lord's help in the hardships of the body, but more fundamentally he must receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit into his heart and be washed of all his sins. And he must pass on the grace of salvation he has received to his neighbors, serving them so that they too may come to the Lord of life. ✉

Questions and Answers on Mark Chapter 6

[Question] 1. What change in the Galilean ministry of Jesus does Mark chapter 6 show?

Mark chapter 6 shows the change in which the Galilean ministry that had been carried out with Jesus at its center was expanded into many regions through the sending out of the twelve disciples. At the same time, the unbelief and opposition toward Jesus became more evident, and the process of training the disciples as workers of the gospel also appears in earnest.

Jesus first taught the people of the synagogue in His hometown, Nazareth. But the people of His hometown did not look upon Jesus as the Son of God and the Christ; they thought of Him only as the carpenter and the son of Mary whom they had known, and they rejected Him. Jesus marveled at their unbelief, but He did not stop His ministry; He went about all the villages and continued to teach. Even after He was rejected by those close to Him, the ministry of preaching the word of God went on rather into wider regions.

In particular, Jesus sent out the twelve disciples two by two and gave them power over unclean spirits. As a result, the disciples also came to take part in the ministry of preaching repentance, casting out many demons, and anointing the sick with oil and healing them. This means that the ministry that had been concentrated on Jesus began to be expanded into many villages at the same time through the disciples. But the power of the ministry did not come from the disciples. Because

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Jesus called them and gave them authority, they preached the gospel and did the Lord's work.

This change appears also in the event of feeding the five thousand. Jesus, who was moved with compassion for the multitude that was like sheep without a shepherd, said to the disciples, *"You give them something to eat."* Jesus blessed the five loaves and two fish the disciples had brought, broke them, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples distributed them to the multitude. The One who prepares the food of life and makes it abundant is Jesus, but in the work of delivering it to people He used the disciples. This shows that the gospel would afterward be preached to the whole world through the Lord's servants and the church.

Along with this, the influence of His ministry also grew so great that the name of Jesus became known even to King Herod. But the record concerning the death of John the Baptist shows that on the way of preaching the gospel there follow not only religious unbelief but also political threats and persecution. The more widely the gospel was preached, the more there were people who gladly received it, but there also appeared people who opposed it, fearing that their power and sins would be exposed.

Mark chapter 6 also shows that the faith of the disciples taking part in the ministry was not yet complete. Even after experiencing many miracles, the disciples did not understand the breaking of the loaves, and they were afraid when they saw Jesus walking on the sea. Jesus did not send them merely as people who carry out a task; He trained them as people who do not rely on their own ability and calculation but believe the word and the authority of Jesus.

Therefore the most important change shown in Mark chapter 6 is that the Galilean ministry of Jesus was expanded

through the sending out of the twelve disciples, and that the disciples began to take part directly in preaching the gospel and feeding souls. The ministry of Jesus did not stop despite His hometown's rejection and political threats, and Jesus had compassion on the people who were like sheep without a shepherd and distributed the word and grace widely through the disciples.

[Question] 2. According to Mark 6:1, where was the place Jesus headed for?

Jesus left that place and went to His own hometown, and His disciples also followed Him. The hometown of Jesus spoken of in the passage is Nazareth.

[Question] 3. Mark 6:2–3—when they saw Jesus teaching in the synagogue, what did the people of His hometown do?

When Jesus taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath, many people heard His word and were astonished. They wondered where Jesus had received such wisdom and power, yet they did not receive Him as the Christ, the Son of God.

They regarded Jesus only as "*the carpenter, the Son of Mary*" whom they had known, and even mentioned His brothers and sisters, paying attention only to His ordinary human background. In the end, even though they saw the word He preached and the mighty works He did, they rejected Jesus.

Though astonished at the teaching of Jesus, these people were held fast by the thought that they already knew Him, and

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they could not believe in Him. This shows that if we judge a person by outward appearance and fleshly background, we can end up rejecting even the word of God delivered through him.

[Question] 4. Mark 6:4—what did Jesus say when He was rejected in His hometown?

When Jesus was rejected by the people of His hometown, He said, *"A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."*

This means that even a prophet who is honored elsewhere can rather be rejected in his own country, among his relatives, and in his own house, where people think they know him well on a human level. The people of Jesus' hometown did not believe His word and His power for the reason that they knew His family and the background of His upbringing.

[Question] 5. Mark 6:5—what was Jesus able to do in His hometown, which rejected Him?

Jesus could do no mighty work there; He only laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

This does not mean that Jesus lacked power; it means that because the people of His hometown rejected Him in unbelief, He did not bestow His power widely among them. Even though they did not believe, Jesus showed mercy to the few sick people who came to Him and healed them.

[Question] 6. Mark 6:6—what did Jesus do when He saw their unbelief?

Jesus marveled that the people of His hometown did not believe even though they saw His word and His power. Because of their human knowledge of having watched Jesus for a long time, they rather failed to receive Him as the Christ, the Son of God.

But Jesus did not stop preaching the word because of His hometown's rejection. He left that place and went about all the villages, continuing to teach. This shows that even if people do not believe and reject it, the gospel ministry of preaching the word of God does not stop, and that even if we are refused in one place, we must go and find other souls and preach the word to them.

[Question] 7. Mark 6:7—what mission did Jesus entrust to the twelve disciples, and what authority did He give them?

Jesus called the twelve disciples, paired them two by two, and sent them out into many regions, and He gave them power over unclean spirits.

Verse 7 does not record in detail what the disciples were to preach, but verses 12 and 13 that follow show that they went out and preached that people should repent, cast out many demons, and healed the sick. Therefore the mission entrusted to the disciples was to deliver to many villages the word Jesus had been preaching, and to cast out demons and heal the sick with the authority they had received from the Lord.

The disciples did not do this work by their own ability.

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Because Jesus called them, sent them, and gave them authority, they carried out their mission. Also, His sending them two by two can be understood as His having them help and rely on each other and testify together concerning the word they preached and the works they did.

[Question] 8. Mark 6:8–9—what did Jesus tell the disciples setting out on the road to take with them, and what did He forbid?

Jesus had the disciples take only a staff for the journey and wear sandals. But He commanded them to take no food, no bag, no money in their belts, and not to put on two tunics.

This was so that the disciples would carry out their mission not by preparing many material things or relying on their own possessions, but by trusting the supply and guidance of God, who sent them.

[Question] 9. Mark 6:10–11—what did He say about where the disciples should stay and how they should act when they were not received?

Jesus said that when the disciples entered a house and were received, they should stay in that house until they left that region. This means that they should not move from house to house in search of better treatment or more comfortable surroundings, but should stay with the person who first received them and be faithful to the ministry entrusted to them.

Conversely, He said that in whatever place people did not receive the disciples or listen to the word they preached, they

should shake off the dust under their feet when they departed from there, as a testimony against them. This did not mean to be emotionally angry or to curse them; it was an act showing that the responsibility for refusing lay with those people, even though the gospel had been clearly preached. Since the disciples could not force anyone to believe, after faithfully preaching the word they had to move on to the next region without staying bound to a place that did not receive it.

[Question] 10. How do Mark 6:12–13 report the ministry of the disciples?

The disciples, sent by Jesus, went out into many regions and preached that people should repent. Also, with the authority Jesus had given them, they cast out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

In their ministry, preaching the word and helping suffering people appeared together. But it was not by their own ability that the disciples cast out demons and healed the sick. Because Jesus called them, gave them authority, and sent them, they did this work. Through this, the Galilean ministry of Jesus was expanded into many villages through the twelve disciples.

[Question] 11. How do Mark 6:14–29 recount the course of events that led to the death of John the Baptist?

As the name and the power of Jesus became widely known, King Herod also heard the report of Him. Some said that Jesus was like Elijah or one of the old prophets, but Herod thought

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that John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded, had risen again. So Mark goes back to a past event and explains the course by which John the Baptist came to die.

Herod had taken as his wife Herodias, who had been the wife of his brother Philip. John the Baptist plainly rebuked Herod, saying that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. Because of this, Herod, for the sake of Herodias, had John the Baptist arrested and bound in prison. Herodias regarded John, who had pointed out her sin, as an enemy and wanted to kill him, but she could not have her way. This was because Herod, knowing John to be a just and holy man, feared him and was protecting him. When Herod heard John's words, he was greatly troubled, and yet he heard him gladly; but he did not turn from his sin and obey the word.

Then Herod's birthday came, and a feast was held for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced there and pleased Herod and his guests, Herod swore to the girl that he would give her whatever she wanted. When the girl asked her mother what she should ask for, Herodias told her to demand the head of John the Baptist. The girl went in at once to the king and requested that the head of John the Baptist be given to her on a platter.

Herod was exceedingly sorry when he heard this. But conscious of the oath he had made and of the eyes of those who sat at the feast, he could not refuse the demand. In the end he sent an executioner to the prison and had John the Baptist beheaded, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl. The girl brought it to her mother. When John's disciples heard the news, they came and took away his corpse and buried it.

This event shows that John the Baptist, unafraid of the

king's power, declared sin to be sin, testified of God's will, and was martyred. Herod, on the other hand, heard the word of God and even felt the anguish of conscience, but he did not forsake his sin and turn back; and in the end, fearing what people thought of him and the loss of face more than the word of God, he came to the sin of killing a righteous man. What matters is not to stop at hearing the word gladly or feeling a momentary pricking of heart, but to acknowledge one's sin before that word and turn back.

[Question] 12. Mark 6:17–18—why was John the Baptist arrested and put in prison?

When Herod married Herodias, who had been the wife of his brother Philip, John the Baptist rebuked Herod, saying, *"It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."* On hearing this, Herod, for the sake of Herodias, sent and had John the Baptist arrested and bound in prison.

John the Baptist did not hide the sin or compromise out of fear of the king's power; he plainly pointed out what was contrary to the word of God. He was imprisoned not because he had committed any sin, but because he honestly testified of the will of God.

[Question] 13. Mark 6:19—what did Herodias do when she heard the rebuke of John the Baptist?

Herodias neither accepted the rebuke of John the Baptist, who had pointed out her sin, nor repented. On the contrary, she regarded John as an enemy and tried to kill him, but at that

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time she could not accomplish her intent.

This shows that if a person does not acknowledge his sins before the word of God but hates the one who rebukes him, his heart grows even harder, and he can go on in the end to a greater sin.

[Question] 14. Mark 6:20—how did Herod treat John the Baptist?

Herod knew John the Baptist to be a just and holy man, feared him, and protected him. Also, when he heard John's words, he was greatly troubled, and yet he heard them gladly.

But though Herod knew that John was a man of God and enjoyed listening to his words, he did not forsake the sin he had been rebuked for and turn back. This shows that it is not enough merely to respect the word of God and be moved in heart; one must acknowledge one's sin before that word and actually turn back and obey.

[Question] 15. Mark 6:21–28—what was the scheme Herodias devised to kill John the Baptist?

Herodias used Herod's birthday feast as an opportunity to kill John the Baptist. When Herod invited his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee and gave a feast, the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, and pleased Herod and his guests. At this, Herod swore to the girl that he would give her whatever she wanted.

When the girl asked her mother what she should ask for, Herodias said, *"The head of John the Baptist!"* The girl went

in at once to Herod and requested that the head of John the Baptist be given to her on a platter. Herod was exceedingly sorry, but conscious of the oath he had made and of the eyes of those who sat at the feast, he could not refuse the request. In the end he sent an executioner and had John the Baptist, who was in prison, beheaded, and his head was passed by way of the girl to Herodias.

The passage does not state that Herodias had planned everything from the beginning, including her daughter's dance and Herod's oath. But it is clear that once Herod's oath was given, she seized it as her opportunity and had her daughter demand the head of John the Baptist. Instead of acknowledging her sin before the word of God and turning back, Herodias tried to cover her sin by removing the man of God who had rebuked her.

[Question] 16. Mark 6:30–32—what did Jesus do when He heard the report of the returned disciples on their mission journey?

The apostles who returned from their mission journey gathered to Jesus and reported to Him in detail all that they had done and taught. Seeing that there were so many people coming and going that the disciples did not even have time to eat, Jesus said, *"Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while."* So Jesus and His disciples departed by boat to a deserted place by themselves.

Jesus not only sent the disciples out to work; after they returned, He listened to their report and also provided the rest they needed. This shows that along with being faithful to the gospel ministry, it is also necessary to rest body and mind in the Lord so that we can carry out our mission again.

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[Question] 17. Mark 6:33–34—what does His being moved with compassion for the multitude that was like sheep without a shepherd show?

Many people who saw Jesus and His disciples going by boat to a deserted place ran there from many cities and arrived there ahead of them. Jesus did not regard the great multitude that thronged to Him, leaving Him no chance to rest, as a bother, nor did He send them away; seeing that they were like sheep without a shepherd, He was moved with compassion for them.

Without the protection and guidance of a shepherd, sheep do not know where to go, cannot find food, and can hardly protect themselves from danger. In the same way, the multitude of that time, even though they had religious leaders, had not been rightly taught the will of God and the way of salvation, and they were wandering spiritually. They were starving for the word, not knowing what the true food of life was.

That Jesus was moved with compassion for them shows the heart of the true Shepherd, who looks deeply not only into people's bodily suffering but even into the state of their souls. The compassion of Jesus did not stop at a feeling of mere pity. Jesus soon taught them many things, feeding them with the word of God, and then fed their hungry bodies with bread as well.

Therefore this passage teaches that what people need most is to come to Jesus, the true Shepherd, and hear and believe the word of life. Jesus does not turn away from the souls that have lost their way amid sin and false teachings; He is the true Shepherd, who lights up the way of salvation with the word of God and even supplies the food they need. Also, the workers who follow Jesus must not regard people as numbers for the

results of their ministry. With the Lord's heart they must have compassion on each soul wandering without hearing the word of life, and preach the gospel to them.

[Question] 18. Mark 6:35–37—what did the disciples answer to the words *"You give them something to eat"*?

Since the hour was late and the place was a deserted place, the disciples asked Jesus to send the multitude away so that they might buy something to eat in the surrounding country and villages. But when Jesus said, *"You give them something to eat,"* the disciples answered, *"Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?"*

Because the disciples calculated only the practical situation of having to feed so many people and the cost it would require, they thought they had no ability to undertake that task. They had not yet realized that when they offered their lack to Jesus, the Lord would make it abundant.

[Question] 19. Mark 6:39–40—what did Jesus command the multitude before performing the miracle of the five loaves and two fish?

Jesus commanded all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. So the multitude gathered in an orderly way and sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties.

Before distributing food to so many people, Jesus had the multitude sit down in order. This shows that the Lord's work is

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not carried out in confusion, but in obedience to His word and in order.

[Question] 20. What lesson does the miracle of the five loaves and two fish in Mark 6:38–44 give us?

All the disciples had were five loaves and two fish. That was far too little to feed a multitude of about five thousand men alone. But Jesus did not look only at what was lacking; He said, *"How many loaves do you have? Go and see."* This was the word by which He had the disciples discover the little they had and bring it to Him.

After having the multitude sit down in groups on the green grass, Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish and looked up to heaven and blessed them. Then He broke the loaves and gave them to His disciples to set before the people, and He also divided the two fish among them all. The little food entrusted to the Lord's hands became so abundant that all the people ate their fill and twelve baskets were filled with what was left.

This event teaches us that even if what we have is small and lacking, when we offer it to the Lord in faith, the Lord uses it to save and feed many people. By the disciples' calculation, even buying two hundred denarii worth of bread was a great problem, but for the power of Jesus, just five loaves and two fish were enough. Therefore believers must not give up their mission on the ground that their ability and material means are lacking, but must offer to the Lord what they now have.

Also, Jesus did not distribute the loaves to the multitude directly; after blessing and breaking them, He gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. The One who multiplied the loaves was Jesus, and the ones who delivered them to the

people were the disciples. This shows that although the power that saves souls and the food of life come from Jesus, the Lord uses believers and the church in the work of distributing that food to people.

The direct event of the passage is the miracle in which Jesus supplied bodily food to the hungry multitude. But applied spiritually, the true food that saves people's souls is the word of the gospel that Jesus Christ has fulfilled. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took on all the sins of mankind, and He died on the Cross, receiving the judgment on those sins, and then rose from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins and obtains everlasting life. Believers must distribute to starving souls not teachings of their own making, but this gospel of life that the Lord has completed.

The fact that after all the people had eaten their fill twelve baskets still remained shows that the supply of Jesus is neither lacking nor stingy. The grace of the Lord and the power of His salvation are not for any one person alone; they abundantly save every soul that believes and receives the gospel. Therefore this miracle gives us the lesson that we must believe in the Lord's power rather than in our lack, and distribute abundantly to others the word of life we have received from the Lord.

[Question] 21. Mark 6:41—what does it mean that Jesus looked up to heaven and blessed before distributing the loaves and fish to the people?

That Jesus looked up to heaven and blessed shows that the loaves and fish were given from God, and He gave thanks to God and blessed that food. All that was before His eyes were

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five loaves and two fish, but Jesus did not look at that lack; He looked to God in heaven.

This act shows that the true supply and power that feed people and keep them alive are not in human calculation or possessions, but in God. The blessing was no incantation or formal procedure; it was a prayer of thanksgiving and faith that acknowledged God as the Provider and trusted His power.

Therefore, when what believers have looks small and insufficient, rather than complaining or giving up, they should thank God, who gave it, and entrust it to Him in faith. When the Lord blesses and uses it, even a small thing is used as an abundant instrument that benefits many people.

[Question] 22. Mark 6:42–44—what was the miracle that appeared when He gave the five loaves and two fish?

When Jesus blessed the five loaves and two fish, broke them, and gave them to the disciples, a miracle took place: even as the disciples kept distributing them to the multitude, the food did not run out but became abundant. As a result, the men alone who ate the loaves were five thousand, and all who were there did not merely taste a little but ate their fill. When the leftover fragments of bread and fish were gathered after the meal, they filled twelve baskets.

This miracle shows that Jesus is not merely a prophet who meets one person’s needs, but the Creator God, who feeds countless people abundantly with a little food. What the disciples had was so little that before the huge multitude it did not even amount to a single meal, but when it was held in the hands of Jesus, it became abundant food that fed everyone with

some left over. Man's lack and the limits of circumstances could not restrict the power of Jesus.

Also, Jesus blessed the loaves, broke them, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples brought to the people the bread they had received from the Lord. The power that multiplied the loaves and fed the multitude came from Jesus, but Jesus used the disciples in the work of distributing them. This shows that when the Lord delivers the food of life to the people of the world, He uses believers and the church as the channel of the gospel.

This event was actually a miracle of supplying bodily food to a hungry multitude, but applied spiritually, it represents the distributing of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls that have lost life and are starving because of sin. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took on all the sins of all mankind, and He died on the Cross, receiving the judgment on those sins, and then rose from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of all sins and obtains new life. The Lord has the believers and the church who first received this food of life distribute it freely to other souls as well.

That twelve baskets remained even after all had eaten their fill shows that the Lord's supply and the grace of His salvation are never lacking. The heart of the miracle does not lie only in a little food turning into much food. It lies in the fact that Jesus is God, who feeds countless people abundantly, and that He distributed that abundant food through His disciples.

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[Question] 23. Mark 6:43—what do the leftover fragments, gathered into twelve baskets after the people had eaten their fill, show?

That even after all the people had eaten their fill, the leftover fragments of bread and fish filled twelve baskets shows that the supply of Jesus is not lacking in the least but exceedingly abundant. Five loaves and two fish were far too little to feed a multitude of five thousand men alone, but in the hands of Jesus they became food that fed everyone amply and still remained.

This reveals that Jesus is not One who barely meets people's needs, but God, who meets them amply. What the disciples had and their ability were small, but the power that fed the multitude came not from the disciples but from Jesus. Therefore, even if believers and the church look small and feeble, when the Lord blesses and uses them, they distribute the food of life to countless souls.

Applying this event spiritually, the bread makes us think of the gospel of life that saves the souls starving because of sin. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took on all the sins of all mankind, and He died on the Cross, receiving the judgment on those sins, and then rose from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins and obtains new life. This gospel is not for any one region or a few people only; it is ample enough to save everyone who believes and receives it.

Jesus gave the loaves He had blessed and broken to the disciples, and the disciples distributed them to the multitude. In the same way, the Lord today also uses believers and the church as the channel that delivers the gospel of life. The grace does not shrink or run out because the church distributes the

gospel to many people. Rather, the Lord's salvation and grace are so abundant that even more souls can eat and still have some left over.

The passage clearly records that what remained was twelve baskets, but it does not directly interpret the number twelve as carrying some symbolism. Therefore the meaning we should hold on to first in this passage is that the power and grace of Jesus are ample beyond man's lack, enough to feed everyone to the full and still have some left over.

[Question] 24. Mark 6:45—what did Jesus command His disciples after the miracle of the five loaves and two fish?

Immediately after the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida. Meanwhile, Jesus remained there and sent the multitude away.

This shows that Jesus directed His disciples' movement Himself, and that He looked after the multitude to the end so that they returned in an orderly way.

[Question] 25. Mark 6:46—what did Jesus do after taking leave of the multitude?

After taking leave of the multitude and sending them away, Jesus went up on the mountain to pray alone.

Even after performing a great miracle and feeding so many people, Jesus did not linger amid people's praise and enthusiasm; He went before God and prayed. This shows Jesus

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putting fellowship with God first even after finishing an important work.

[Question] 26. Mark 6:47–48—in what situation were the disciples when Jesus came walking on the sea?

When evening came, the boat the disciples were in was in the middle of the sea, and Jesus was alone on the land. As the wind blew against them and the boat could not go forward, the disciples were straining at rowing through the night.

They had obeyed the command of Jesus and gone by boat, but meeting a fierce headwind, they were placed in a situation they could hardly escape by their own strength. Though Jesus was praying on the mountain, He was already watching the disciples' distress, and about the fourth watch of the night He came toward them, walking on the sea.

[Question] 27. Mark 6:49—what did the disciples do when they saw the One coming walking on the sea?

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they failed to recognize Him; they supposed He was a ghost and cried out.

Because they were worn out by the fierce wind and the long rowing and gripped by fear, even when they saw Jesus coming to help them, they mistook Him for yet another danger that had appeared.

[Question] 28. Mark 6:50–51—what did Jesus say to the astonished and frightened disciples?

To the astonished and frightened disciples Jesus immediately spoke, saying, *"Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."* Jesus clearly revealed who He was, so that the disciples would cast off their fear and take heart.

After that, when Jesus got into the boat the disciples were in, the wind ceased, and the disciples were greatly amazed in their hearts. This shows that the disciples' true peace comes not from surroundings without wind, but from Jesus being with them and speaking to them.

[Question] 29. Mark 6:51–52—how do verses 51 and 52 speak of the reason the disciples were amazed when they saw the wind cease?

Verses 51 and 52 say that the reason the disciples were so greatly amazed was that they had not understood the breaking of the loaves, and their heart had rather been hardened.

Only a little while before, the disciples had seen with their own eyes the miracle of Jesus feeding countless people with five loaves and two fish. Through that miracle they should have realized that Jesus holds the power of God that surpasses human limits, but they did not receive its meaning into their hearts. So even when Jesus walked on the sea and made the wind cease, they did not recognize His power by faith, and they were greatly amazed as though they had seen something wholly unexpected.

That their heart was hardened does not simply mean that they lacked knowledge; it refers to the spiritual state of failing

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to grasp with the heart the meaning of the word and the miracles they had already seen and heard, and so failing to believe clearly who Jesus is.

[Question] 30. What kind of place is Gennesaret, which appears in verse 53?

Gennesaret is a fertile plain stretching along the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was about 4 kilometers long and about 1.5 kilometers wide, and it is known as a place where farming flourished, with plentiful water and rich soil.

In the Bible, *"Gennesaret"* is also used as a name indicating the Sea of Galilee, but *"the land of Gennesaret"* in Mark 6:53 means not the lake itself but the region on its northwestern shore. After crossing the sea, Jesus and His disciples anchored their boat here.

The people of Gennesaret recognized Jesus and spread the news through the whole region, and they brought the sick to Jesus on their beds. This place was therefore one of the important regions of the Galilean ministry, where the fame of Jesus was widely known and many sick people came and were healed.

[Question] 31. Mark 6:53–56—what happened at Gennesaret after Jesus arrived there?

When Jesus and His disciples crossed the sea, came to the land of Gennesaret, and anchored there, the people of that place immediately recognized that the One who had come out of the boat was Jesus. They ran through that whole surrounding region, spreading the news that Jesus was there.

Wherever they heard Jesus was, they carried the sick there on their beds. In every country, city, and village Jesus entered, the people laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged that they might touch even the hem of His garment. As a result, all who touched Jesus were made well.

This event shows that the name and the power of Jesus were widely known throughout the whole region of Gennesaret, and that no disease could defeat His power. Also, in the sight of the people carrying the sick on their beds, we see their earnest desire to lead the suffering to Jesus. The power that makes a person whole was not in the garment itself, but in Jesus, who wore that garment. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Recognize the spiritual aspect and accept the word of God just as it is

< Mark 6:1-6 >

"Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?' So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.' Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching."

Listen to the word, preparing to greet the Lord at any time

Living a life of serving the gospel is not easy. Everyone has a heart that wants things to get better, both in spirit and in flesh.

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These days the gospel of the water and the Spirit is being preached widely abroad, for which I am thankful, but when I look at this country, my heart aches a great deal. What I hope and desire is that people would all believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins, and live with the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts, so that whenever the Lord comes, they can greet Him. Therefore, when we listen to the word, we should listen with the alertness of asking, what would become of me if I went before the Lord tomorrow? Only then can we go before the Lord at any time when He comes.

Someone has said that time goes at 10 kilometers per hour in one's teens, 20 kilometers in one's twenties, 30 kilometers in one's thirties, 40 kilometers in one's forties, and 50 kilometers in one's fifties. It is really so. In our teens we hardly notice time passing, but past our thirties we feel how fast it goes from then on, and around fifty the years fly by so fast that we can hardly keep our bearings. That is how time goes. Therefore, when we hear the word of God, we must truly take it to heart, hear it and believe it, and live always prepared to greet the Lord.

Jesus, who was rejected in His hometown

Looking at the passage, after the Lord brought Jairus's daughter back to life, He left that region and went to His hometown. It was the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up. His disciples also followed Him, and when Jesus taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath, many people heard Him and were astonished, saying, *"Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!" (Mark 6:2)*, and, *"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses,*

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Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" (Mark 6:3), and they rejected Jesus. Then Jesus said, *"A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house" (Mark 6:4)*, and He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them; and He marveled at their unbelief, left that place, and went about all the villages teaching. This is the content of the passage we have read today.

When Jesus taught in the synagogue of His hometown, Nazareth, the people were astonished. For as far as the people knew, Jesus was the son of a carpenter. As the passage records, Jesus' brothers in the flesh were James, Joses, Judas, and Simon—the James who wrote the Epistle of James is regarded as Jesus' own younger brother—and He also had several sisters. So we should know that Mary bore several children. Jesus taught the word in the synagogue of His hometown, but the people did not believe.

If you know a person only in the flesh, you cannot accept the word of God

I am concerned that you, too, may perhaps have a tendency to take lightly and not believe the word I preach, because you know me in the flesh. There are times when I speak on a human level, but when I speak with the word of God laid open, even if I sometimes mix in a joke, I am delivering not human talk but the very word of God. You have your Bibles and I have mine, and we lay the Bible open together and look at it together as we speak of the word of God; so the word you hear at such a time you must hear as the word of God. You must not refuse to accept the word of God because you think of the person in fleshly terms.

Jesus preached the word of salvation in His hometown as well, but the people did not believe, because they knew Jesus only in the flesh. We know a person in the flesh, but we must also know him spiritually. We must look at both sides: how that person is spiritually, and how he is in the flesh. Looking at the fleshly side, since the flesh is flesh, we can know all that person's faults and blemishes. But on the spiritual side, we must be able to see how that person fears God and follows Him by faith; and if he does, it profits us only when we have the faith to receive into our hearts and believe the word he delivers.

When Jesus returned to His hometown and spoke, the people of the town said that the words He spoke were remarkable, but that they simply could not accept them. They rejected Him, thinking: Is He not the son of the carpenter? Are not His brothers and sisters all here with us? If these words had come from some great figure, we would receive them as great, but this Man is no great figure, is he? But when we see and hear the word of God, we must actually receive it into our hearts and believe it just as it is, as the word of God.

To exalt Mary is to reject Jesus

As I tell you from time to time, Mary was the mother of Jesus in the flesh, a woman who bore several children on this earth. Yet we must not make an idol of this woman, turning her into a being to be worshiped, believing what is vain and passing it on to people. The Catholic Church has exalted Mary, the fleshly mother of Jesus, without measure, calling her the Queen of Heaven. It also says that Mary was born without sin, which makes no sense. Looking at the Gospels, the reason the Jews did not believe in Jesus but rejected Him was that they knew Him in

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the flesh, thinking: did not the woman called Mary bear several children, and is not Jesus the firstborn among them?

But in fact, Jesus is the One who, as prophesied, was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came to this earth borrowing that woman's body. And He is God, who saved us by receiving baptism from John and so taking on the sin of the world, dying on the Cross shedding His blood, and rising from the dead. Yet the people who knew Jesus in the flesh despised Him, saying that His family was no great family, that they were no nobility, and that He was just the carpenter, the son of Mary. Just as the people of Nazareth rejected Jesus, believing in Jesus while exalting Mary is also, in truth, rejecting Jesus. Look at the images they have set up: Jesus is a tiny child, held in the arms of Mary, His mother in the flesh. Their prayers contain the petition, 'Queen of Heaven, pray for us,' and by now they have come to hold Mary up virtually as a divine being. In earlier days it went only as far as bowing to Mary as they did to Jesus, but now they give Mary greater prominence than Jesus.

I speak of these things because there are many people caught up in this. In every country the Catholic Church has entered, the veneration of Mary has risen and faith has gone wrong; in countries like Spain the worship of Mary is extraordinary. But Mary was a person who confessed herself to be the maidservant of the Lord; just as we have been saved, Mary too was a person who had to be saved in exactly the same way—she is not in essence a divine being. There are so many Catholics in the world that I suppose they number around a billion, and the world lumps Catholics and Christians together in its statistics as people who believe in God. But when their faith is examined in the light of the word of Scripture, it is completely wrong. Catholicism is the most worldly religion among the religions of the world.

Accept the word of God just as it is

The people of the town of Nazareth rejected Jesus because they knew Him in the flesh. In fact, who listens to our words the least? Is it not our own family that rejects us the most? It is because they see us in the flesh. Because they think, 'I know you, and you are nothing special compared to me,' they do not believe even when we speak the word of God. About worldly words one may make different claims, but the word of God it is right to believe just as it is written. Our Lord, too, rather marveled that the people did not believe when He spoke in His fleshly hometown, and He went to other villages, going about among them and teaching.

We, too, are hardly recognized here at home, but around the world the books we publish have gone in, preaching and teaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the people who have received the remission of sins through those books—among them are many pastors and theologians—are deeply thankful to us. It is those far away, rather than those nearby, who recognize us. Believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the word of God, live by that faith, and greet the Lord. There will be more happenings and more changes ahead, and more abnormal weather as well. Above all, you must firmly believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and all the word of God, and live enduring to the end. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

God, who saves abundantly

< Mark 6:34-44 >

"And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.' But He answered and said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' And they said to Him, 'Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?' But He said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and see.' And when they found out they said, 'Five, and two fish.' Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men."

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The Lord, who fed five thousand with a single lunchbox

In the open field, Jesus fed the huge crowd of people who had grown hungry while following Him. The two fish were small fish, the size that would fit in the side-dish container of a lunchbox, and the five barley loaves were bread packed small in a lunchbox, rolled up like little rice cakes. So it was one lunchbox. With that one lunchbox our Lord fed five thousand men alone, so counting the women and children, I suppose there must have been roughly fifteen thousand.

The disciples asked Jesus to send the multitude away, since this was a deserted place and the hour was growing late, so that they could go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves something to eat. But Jesus said, *"You give them something to eat,"* and the disciples asked back whether they should go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread to feed them. Bread enough to feed such a great multitude one meal would be an enormous quantity—more than all the bread of a whole district gathered together. When Jesus told them to find out how many loaves there were, there was one lunchbox holding two fish and five barley loaves. Jesus had the people sit down in groups of a hundred and of fifty, took that lunchbox, looked up to heaven, and blessed it. He offered a prayer of blessing. Then He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the word records that the disciples carried the bread and fish to the people and everyone ate their fill.

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Jesus is God, who came to this earth in the flesh

What is the word saying to us here? It is telling us that Jesus, who fed this huge crowd in the open field with two fish and five barley loaves, is God, who came to this earth in the flesh. Who is the Jesus we believe in? The name Jesus means the Savior, and the word Christ means the Anointed One, referring to the offices of King, High Priest, and Prophet. Jesus is God to you and me; He is the Savior, who has removed all our sins; and He is our Prophet. Through Mark, God is showing us the event that actually took place, in which Jesus performed the miracle of the five loaves and two fish and fed about fifteen thousand people.

What the two fish and the five barley loaves tell us

Then what does this word say to the children of God who believe in Jesus? It says that through the church of God, God distributes the bread of life to all the people of this world, and that even after distributing it, He makes it remain amply, filling twelve baskets. God preaches the gospel, the bread of life, to all people, and He saves whoever believes that gospel. Do you believe this fact? The two fish speak of the church. In the days of the early Church, the secret sign of the Christians was the drawing of a fish. When someone drew a fish, they knew that this person was a Christian. The number two is the number of witnesses, and it speaks of the union of the church. The Lord said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20)*.

The church of God may be small and feeble in this world, looking as insignificant as one lunchbox set before that great multitude. But just as that one lunchbox fed that great multitude

with twelve baskets left over, however many people there are in this wilderness-like world, God distributes the bread of life amply through the church of God. In whatever region the church of God is established, and God's people and God's servants unite and work there, all the people of that region escape the starvation of their souls; by eating the bread of life they receive the remission of sins, obtain everlasting life, and become children of God, and they receive and enjoy the abundant blessings of God.

God saves the whole world amply, with room to spare

God is saying that He will do this work, and that He will keep on doing it. All over the world there are so many false ones who fleece the sheep with religion. With so many hinderers, one might wonder how the gospel can be preached; but looking at this word, I believe God has said that even though the church of God is small, through this church He preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit pervasively to the whole world, and saves all the people of the whole world amply, with something to spare. Like the two fish, we must go to any region whatever and preach this bread—the gospel of salvation, which is the grace of God and the bread of life. When we preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took on all our sins by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and saved us by rising from the dead—whoever believes this gospel, anywhere in the whole world, is saved.

Therefore we have no need to be anxious. We should be a church that prays for the whole world, prays to Jesus, who has become our God, asking for His power and believing that power, receiving His guidance, and proclaiming to all nations that He is the Savior.

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Even a small flock God uses amply

Beloved saints, even though the church in this region is now very small and not yet fully furnished, and it amounts to the workers and a few families of brothers and sisters gathering in a family-like atmosphere to worship and pray, God preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to families and neighbors through this church, and He amply saves the souls that believe this gospel. Never be weighed down because your number is small. If even a few people unite with the workers and the church of God and preach the gospel, God enables them to deliver the word of life amply to countless people in this region.

Preach to souls the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the food of life. I ask you to do it by faith. We, too, will soon go back into the mission field. When we go there and preach the grace of God and the gospel of life, the people who believe that gospel are amply saved. God supplies so that the food of the gospel does not run short, and He enables us to preach this gospel amply to the whole world. And I believe that by the grace of God we will carry out these works amply. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who satisfies the hunger and thirst of souls worldwide through us

< Mark 6:35-44 >

"When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.' But He answered and said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' And they said to Him, 'Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?' But He said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and see.' And when they found out they said, 'Five, and two fish.' Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men."

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There are people all over the world eating the bread of life

For some years now we have been doing mission work with e-books and paper books, and when we took stock, we found that coworkers had been raised up in as many as ninety-seven countries. In some countries there are three or four coworkers. I cannot tell you how thankful I am. And that counts only the coworkers we can see; the people who have heard the gospel from them and been nurtured are countless. I am truly thankful, and thankful again. I can only give thanks for the many things God has blessed us with, and I believe that next year He will give us even more reasons for thanksgiving.

The Lord, who blessed one lunchbox and fed five thousand

A little before this passage, John the Baptist, who had baptized Jesus on His head and thereby passed the sin of the world entirely on to Him, was martyred in prison. As the news spread, some people, seeing Jesus working in power, even said that John the Baptist must have risen again. Jesus went on ministering, healing the sick, and then crossed to the other side of the sea by boat, and many people followed and listened to the word. Then, when mealtime came, the disciples suggested to Jesus that He send the people to the villages to buy themselves whatever food they could. Jesus said, *"You give them something to eat,"* and the disciples asked back whether they would not have to buy two hundred denarii worth of bread to feed so many people.

When Jesus told them to go and see how many loaves there

were, there was someone who had brought along a lunchbox. In those days most people were under the oppression of Rome and commonly went without meals, yet someone had a lunchbox holding two fish and five barley loaves. The Lord had the people sit down in companies of a hundred and of fifty, took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, and blessed them. He pronounced a blessing. Then He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples put them in baskets and distributed them to the people; and the food kept coming out of that lunchbox as though there were no end to it, so that everyone ate their fill and there was still some left. Those who ate were five thousand men alone, so counting the women and children, there must have been fifteen to twenty thousand. That the Lord bestowed such power, that He blessed—this is the content of this passage.

That blessing continues even now through the church of God

We are now preaching the gospel to the whole world, and this blessing the Lord has given—the blessing of feeding people with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, saving lives, and establishing churches to save souls—continues on this earth even now. We send out e-books, have people download and read the books, take book orders through our website and send them out, and to our coworkers we send a box or two at a time, sometimes five thousand or ten thousand copies by container. When we send books to the coworkers in each country, they hand them out to the people around them, and those people read the books, receive the remission of sins, and eat the bread of life. In this world that lies in famine, people are seeing, hearing,

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reading, and believing the word about the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of sins, obtaining new life, and filling the bellies of their starving souls. God is working that way through us right now.

The blessing of God was not only for that time; it is still here today, unchanged. God gave the blessing, but who carries that bread to the people? Did not the disciples carry it to them in baskets? The whole world is now in famine spiritually. We are living in a bleak, lifeless age in which there is not one thing unconnected with money. Broadcasting keeps multiplying in order to make money, and songs, rather than carrying people's feelings, joys, and sorrows, have become a means of capturing people's eyes and hearts to make money. Fashions change from one week to the next, new trends surge in waves, and the world changes so fast that we cannot keep up however we try. Since everything is tied to money, people without money cannot even keep up. In such a world, people's hearts are empty, and their souls are dying because of sin.

That is why our preaching the gospel free of charge is a truly precious work. The Lord said, *"Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8)*. In the letters people send us now and then, they are amazed that we preach this gospel for free, with no money involved. We give the books of the gospel of the water and the Spirit without price and tell people how their sins have been removed without receiving anything in return; and I cannot tell you how many people, through us, are gaining relief in their hearts, receiving the remission of sins, gaining vitality, and giving thanks. Where in this world is anything free? Yet we make the books and even bear the postage, giving them wholly without price so that people can receive them in their own homes. And so their souls are receiving the remission of sins.

Long ago, before a huge crowd, Jesus looked up to heaven

and blessed the two fish and the five barley loaves, and the people of the whole world are now receiving and enjoying that blessing through the church of God. The two fish speak of the church. The Lord said that where two or three are gathered in His name, He would be with them. It means that when the people who have received the remission of sins truly want to work for the kingdom of God, the Lord is with them. And the barley loaves—the food of life—speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and so took on our sins, bearing them; He hung on the Cross, died shedding His blood, and rose from the dead, and so saved all mankind from sin—and this truth of salvation He has let us preach without price. He has let us carry it and pass it out. What an amazing blessing this is!

In the world there are many false works that shout the gospel while in reality filling their own pockets in the name of Jesus. But true gospel preaching is giving freely what was freely received. The whole world is now waiting for us. Serving the Lord in the church can be hard, but it is we who are doing a work of real worth. Without wanting so much as a hundred won from anyone, we have become the channel that delivers the blessing of God so that they may be saved entirely without price. The Lord said, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37)*. We must be the channel that delivers this gospel to thirsty souls. You and I are that channel. Therefore we must do this work without ceasing, and we who do this work are also blessed. God has made us the channel of blessing, His pipeline; blessing us is blessing them, and so, in the end, He blesses us. You and I are the one lunchbox. We are the church that holds the bread of life—we ourselves.

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Only those who have been led and have learned can serve others

They say that the Japanese learn thoroughly even to make a single piece of sushi. The point is that a learner must not be promoted suddenly, because if a person rises to a high position without being properly trained at the learning stage, he cannot properly teach those who come after him. The life of faith and church life are the same. Only when you have been sufficiently led, have received rebuke, and have been guided can you later become a good senior who looks after, leads, and teaches those under you. If you simply become a high-ranking person without training, you end up knowing neither how to care for those under you nor how to lead them. You must learn; to learn you must be governed; and you must experience each thing for yourself.

There is a story that when Shakyamuni was dying, he pointed to one disciple and said, ‘I have told this man everything, so receive his guidance.’ Then another disciple protested, ‘You and I followed him together and heard the same words—what is the difference?’ The one who had been appointed replied, ‘Your memory is good and you can recite all the master’s words, but you have no realization in your heart; you must go out and suffer,’ and sent him away. After he went out and, through all kinds of hardship, gained a great realization and returned, he was then received with the words, ‘Now you have come to realization.’

The one who has realization in his heart is the born-again person

Today, both within the church of God and throughout the world, there are many people who know how one ought to

believe in Jesus but have no realization in their hearts. The person with realization in his heart is the born-again person—the person born again by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only the person who knows that he himself is one who must die, one bound for hell, one who must be judged, and who realizes with his heart that the Lord came to this earth and saved him with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that the Lord is his Savior and that by believing in Him he receives salvation—only such a person is born again. A person who knows it only in theory can talk about it, but he cannot actually live like a disciple of Jesus. There are people who memorize the whole Bible. But only the person who realizes with his heart that he is a hopeless being bound for hell, that the Lord came and did this work to save him, and that only by believing in the Lord are his sins removed—only he receives salvation, becomes a disciple of the Lord, and can carry and pass out the blessings of God. Otherwise, if he simply becomes a high-ranking person, all he can do is press down and crush others. The person who has truly met the Lord, realized, and follows the Lord does not oppress others and does not behave rudely.

If you believe in and serve the Lord, you are precious workers of God. It is only that your positions differ and the work entrusted to you differs. Rather than crushing someone because he is under you, you must first come to realization yourself, first receive salvation yourself, and first become a follower of the Lord yourself. And you must know how precious your fellow workers are. Even with countless people following Him, Jesus worked with His disciples, and He is working even now through you and me who follow Him. There are countless people in this world, but God is blessing the people of the whole world through you and me. I am truly thankful. He has given us many blessings this year as well, and I pray that next year He will give the

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brothers and sisters, His workers, even more blessings in both spirit and flesh, so that we may do even more work. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Son of God veiled by familiarity

< Mark 6:1-6 >

"Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, 'Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?' So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.' Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching."

People who were astonished but did not receive Him

When Jesus went to His hometown, His disciples also followed Him. When the Sabbath came, Jesus taught in the synagogue. It is not that the people of His hometown heard that teaching and had no response at all. On the contrary, many were

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astonished. They knew that the wisdom of Jesus was no ordinary wisdom, and they could not deny the mighty works performed by His hands. The passage records that they first saw and heard His wisdom and His mighty works. It is not that they had no sign at all worth believing.

But astonishment was not yet faith. The passage records that after hearing the words of Jesus, the people spoke of Him as the son of Mary and the carpenter, the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon, whose sisters were there with them, and rejected Him. They spoke first of His wisdom and His mighty works, but they soon listed the background they knew in the flesh. The problem, as the order of this event shows, is that even before the wisdom and the power laid open in front of them, they did not receive Jesus.

This scene shows that faith is different from mere admiration. One can hear the word of Scripture and say it is remarkable. One can acknowledge the power of Jesus and rate the teachings of Christianity as beneficial. But if one does not receive the word as the word of God that judges oneself, and does not believe in Jesus as one's own Savior, admiration never reaches faith. The people of His hometown asked many questions, but in the end they rejected Jesus. The passage plainly records how it ended: *"'Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?' So they were offended at Him."*

Between being astonished before the word and receiving the word lies an important fork in the heart. Astonishment can evaluate the word from the outside, but faith sets oneself before the word. Astonishment tries to explain Jesus within the range of what I know, but faith learns from the Scriptures the will of God that I had not yet known. Astonishment can arise for a moment and disappear, but faith receives the word it has heard

into the heart and entrusts oneself to that word. The people of His hometown turned back at that very threshold.

The closed judgment made by familiar information

One's hometown is usually a more comfortable place than a strange one. There are people who have watched one another's lives for a long time, and they know names, families, and occupations. Such familiarity helps in daily life, but it cannot take the place of spiritual judgment. The people of Jesus' hometown spoke of His wisdom and His mighty works, then listed His family and His occupation, and finally rejected Him. The passage does not explain which impression worked more strongly within them. It only shows that questions about His familiar background were followed by rejection.

Their fault did not lie in knowing the human background of Jesus. Jesus really had lived among them and stood within relationships they knew. But after speaking of His wisdom and His mighty works, they brought up the familiar information about His family and occupation and rejected Him. The fact that they had watched Him up close did not guarantee right knowledge. Even with information we already have, we must listen again to the identity of Jesus that the Scriptures testify to, and to His word.

The barrier of familiarity can arise for us as well. Because we have long heard the stories of the Bible, we may not ask what the passage is revealing to me today. Because we have often called on the name of Jesus, we may think we already know the gospel of the water and the Spirit well enough. Looking at a preacher's manner of speech or age, his schooling or one slice of his life, we may make light even of the word of Scripture he

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has laid open. Conversely, only because a person's outward appearance is impressive, we may accept even words that do not agree with the Scriptures. Both are attitudes that do not take the word as the standard.

The word of God does not become the word of God because of the human qualifications of the one who delivers it, nor does it cease to be the word of God because of those qualifications. Therefore we must not exalt a person blindly, nor must we close ourselves in advance to the word of Scripture a person delivers because we know him in the flesh. We must examine what the opened Bible actually says. We must receive the Jesus whom the word testifies to. Not familiarity or strangeness, but the Scripture must be the standard of judgment.

This is not an exhortation to give up discernment. The reason the people of His hometown failed was not that they discerned too thoroughly, but that they did not actually discern with the word as the standard. While acknowledging the wisdom and the power of Jesus, they made family relations and occupation the final standard. True discernment is not pushing the word away by weighing a person's background; it is placing what one has heard before the Scriptures and confirming whether it is the truth. If it is a word the Scriptures testify to be right, then laying down my preconceptions and my pride and accepting it—that is faith.

Do not put a person's outward appearance in the place of the authority of the word

Jesus spoke of the reality that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown, among his relatives, and in his own house. Those who are close to a person see much of his weaknesses and his ordinary life. So it is easy for them to put the human figure

they know ahead of the word God delivers through him. That our words are often not well received when we preach the gospel to our families is not unrelated to this. But we must not stop at using this passage to blame those close to us. We must first examine whether we ourselves are judging anyone's words only by fleshly conditions.

We do not believe the word because the person is without blemish. A person's character and conduct are important, and the one who delivers the word ought indeed to live truthfully. Yet no human being can add authority to the word of God. The authority of the word belongs to God. If we open the Bible together and listen to its meaning, we must not let its content slip by lightly even if it comes through a familiar voice. Before that word, my thoughts must be exposed and corrected.

At the same time, we must not confuse the words of man with the word of God. Just because someone holds a religious position, not every opinion of his becomes the word of God. The passage does not teach us to make a person absolute. Rather, it teaches us to look beyond a person's outward form and background to Jesus Himself and His word. Therefore the attitude a hearer needs is not blind obedience but faith grounded in the Scriptures. If what is preached agrees with the Scriptures, do not reject it out of human likes and dislikes; if it departs from the Scriptures, do not follow it because the speaker is famous or familiar.

When we have lived the life of faith for a long time, many expressions grow familiar to our ears. We can use the words sin, salvation, grace, faith, and being born again quite naturally. But being familiar with the words does not mean believing that truth with the heart. The people of Jesus' hometown were not strangers who knew nothing of Him. On the contrary, they thought they knew Him all too well. Yet because of that very

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confidence, they missed the most important fact—who it was that was speaking before them. We, too, must not be satisfied with knowing the vocabulary of the gospel, but must receive with our hearts the salvation of Jesus that the gospel testifies to.

Unbelief is not a lack of power but the result of refusing the word

The passage says that Jesus could do no mighty work there, and only laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. We must not read this to mean that the power of Jesus was great outside His hometown and grew weak inside it. The same context makes clear that the people of His hometown already knew and were astonished at the mighty works done by His hands. The problem was not the power of Jesus but their unbelief. Jesus marveled at that unbelief.

Faith is not a human technique that sets the power of God in motion. Nor is it a success formula by which the miracle we want happens if we manufacture strong conviction. Faith is accepting as true what God has said, and relying on the Jesus revealed in that word. The people of His hometown spoke of the wisdom and the power of Jesus, then listed His family and His occupation and rejected Him. The passage plainly records their response as unbelief.

The record that Jesus marveled at their unbelief makes us solemn. The people saw Jesus and were astonished, they asked questions, and they even knew His family. But all that contact did not lead to faith. We are not saved merely by being near a church, owning a Bible, or having heard the expressions of the gospel. Salvation is received by believing with the heart what Jesus has accomplished. If I set my experience and my appraisal

above the word, I can know many things and yet refuse life itself.

This does not mean, however, that faith is a new merit that man piles up. Faith is not an act by which I accomplish something great and win recognition from God. It is receiving, just as it is, the salvation God has completed through His Son. The one who receives with empty hands has nothing to boast of. He only boasts of and gives thanks to Jesus, who saved him. The people of His hometown placed Jesus under their own knowledge and appraised Him, but the believer places his own judgment under the word.

Jesus did not stop teaching because He met His hometown's rejection. The end of the passage says that He went about all the villages teaching. Rejection could not change the truth of the word, and the unbelief of one region could not end the Lord's ministry. This scene also gives an important direction to the saint who meets refusal while preaching the gospel. We must not despise the other person or alter the word because we have been refused. Neither should we try to force people into submission with our skill with words. As the Lord kept on teaching, we too must deliver the truth truthfully and entrust the outcome to the Lord.

Receive with your heart the Jesus whom the Scriptures testify to

Then who do the Scriptures testify that Jesus is? He is not One who can be explained merely as a carpenter of Nazareth. He is the Savior, the Son of God come among us in a human body. He came not merely to give us fine teachings, but to save those under sin. To know Jesus rightly does not end with knowing information about His name, His hometown, and His family

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relations. We must go on to know and believe how He took on our sins and how He accomplished salvation.

John the Baptist saw Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took on the sins of all the people of the world. In the sin of the world are included all the sins each of us commits from birth to death. Not only the sins revealed to people's eyes but also the sins arising in the heart are included; the sins we remember and the sins we have forgotten, the sins of the past, the present, and the future are all included. Jesus carried the sins He had so taken on to the Cross, received the judgment on those sins, and rose from the dead.

This salvation is not something man completes by adding his own merits day by day. The Scripture says, *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10)*. The salvation Jesus accomplished was completed once and for all. By believing with our hearts the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection, we receive the remission of sins, by which all our sins are removed once and for all. Whoever believes this gospel receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, is born again, and becomes a child of God. He is no longer a sinner with sin remaining in his heart, but a righteous person clothed in the perfect righteousness of the Lord.

To say that we have received the remission of sins once and for all does not mean that the flesh of the person so remitted never does wrong again. We are still weak and can make mistakes, and when we realize our wrongs we must confess them and turn back. But our lack cannot turn the salvation of Jesus back into something unfinished. Confession and turning back are not acts that accomplish the atonement of Jesus over again.

They are the response of faith, by which the person who believes the already completed salvation lives honestly in the light. We must not set the certainty of salvation and the truthfulness of life against each other.

Familiar religious thinking, even after hearing this gospel, insists that one must do something more for one's sins to be removed little by little. It regards the deeds and feelings visible to one's own eyes as more certain than the finished work of Jesus. But faith does not scale the salvation of Jesus to the degree that I feel it. If the Scripture says it is completed, faith receives it as completed. If Jesus took on the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, I believe that my sins, too, were included in it. If He was judged on the Cross and rose again, I believe that He does not demand that I, who believe in Him, pay the price of sin again.

The people of His hometown, with Jesus right before their eyes, confined Him to the person they familiarly knew. Today we, too, can confine Jesus to no more than a moral teacher or someone who gives help. But the Jesus whom the Scriptures testify to is the complete Savior, who took on sin, was judged, and rose again. If we do not accept Him as He is, then even while saying that we exalt Jesus, we are in fact diminishing His salvation. The gospel is not a message to be revised to fit our religious expectations; it is the word that has us believe the facts God has accomplished just as they are.

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The fruit of living by the word after receiving by faith

That salvation does not come from works does not mean that obedience and service are unimportant. The order must be set right. First, Jesus accomplished salvation, and we believe that gospel and receive the remission of sins. Then the child of God who has received the remission of sins follows the guidance of the Holy Spirit, obeys the word, preaches the gospel, and serves his neighbors. Obedience is not the price that buys salvation, but the fruit by which the salvation we have received is revealed in our lives.

If we set up service, offerings, and endurance as conditions for the remission of sins, we make what Jesus accomplished once and for all into something insufficient. Conversely, if we say that since we have received the remission of sins we need not listen to the word and need bear no fruit at all, we make light of the will of the Holy Spirit, who works within us. Living faith relies on Jesus and walks by the word. The size and speed of the fruit may differ from person to person, and one may stumble in weakness. Therefore we must not measure other people's results and pass judgment on their salvation. Rather, each of us must honestly examine whether I truly believe the completed gospel, and whether that faith leads to a life that honors the word.

The hometown people of Mark chapter 6 heard the word but kept their own judgment. The believer, on the contrary, lays down his own judgment before the word. He does not push away the word of Scripture because he knows someone in the flesh, nor let it slip by because it is a word long heard. Neither does he lean on human authority and accept just any word, but discerns by the Scriptures. This is the posture of faith that treasures the word.

This attitude is also needed when we preach the gospel to family or those close to us. We must not be discouraged because the other person knows our shortcomings. Rather than contending to establish my own authority, I must calmly and clearly deliver the Jesus whom the Scriptures testify to. At the same time, I who preach the gospel must also look back on where my words and my life diverge, and turn back. Our perfection is not what saves people, but a life that does not take lightly the grace received is fruit worthy of the gospel.

Jesus was rejected in His hometown, but He went to other villages and kept on teaching. We, too, must not make immediate recognition the standard of faith. It is not that something is true if many people praise it and false if those close to us refuse it. The standard is the word of God. We must not change the gospel out of the desire to be recognized, nor give up on people because of the wound of being refused. Believing the word and delivering that word in love is the precious fruit borne in the person who has received the remission of sins.

Stand before the word again in the very place where you thought you already knew

Today's passage is not a word aimed only at people who have never heard of Jesus. It is a word given also to us, who have long known the news of Jesus and are familiar with church and Scripture. Familiarity can help faith, but if the heart grows proud, it can also become a barrier that keeps us from hearing the word. Before saying, 'I already know,' we must ask whether we actually believe the Jesus whom the Scriptures are testifying to right now.

The people of Jesus' hometown heard His wisdom and knew

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His power, yet they rejected Jesus. We must not remain in their place. Beyond fleshly background and human appraisal, we must look to Jesus, the Son of God. We must receive with our hearts the salvation He completed once and for all. When we believe this gospel, all our sins are removed, and we receive the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

And the saved person goes on to a life that treasures the word. He does not disregard the truth because the voice is familiar, nor follow unconditionally because the voice is famous. He opens the Scriptures, listens, and discerns, and before a right word he bends his own thinking. Even when he meets refusal he does not deform the gospel, but truthfully delivers to his neighbors the life he has received. This is not labor to obtain salvation, but the fruit of thanksgiving offered to the Lord, who has already saved him.

Let us not shut Jesus up inside the small frame of what we know. Let us not veil the Son of God with familiar religious knowledge. Let us not sit in the high seat that evaluates the word, but come down to the place that receives the word's judgment. I hope that all of us will accept just as they are the Jesus whom the Scriptures testify to and the gospel of the water and the Spirit He has fulfilled, and live today by that faith. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who feeds the multitude without a shepherd

< Mark 6:30-44 >

"Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, 'Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.' For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. But the multitudes saw them departing, and many knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things. When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat.' But He answered and said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' And they said to Him, 'Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?' But He said to them, 'How many loaves do you have? Go and see.' And when they found out they said, 'Five, and two fish.' Then He commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. And when He had taken the five

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loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. Now those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men."

The apostles returning to report, and the Lord who gives them rest

In the earlier part of Mark chapter 6, Jesus sent out the twelve. Now the apostles return to Jesus and tell Him in detail all that they did and taught. After working scattered abroad, they gathered again to the Lord. The starting point of the ministry was Jesus, and the One who received their report when the ministry was done was also Jesus. The apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him what they had done and taught.

Jesus did not immediately command the busy disciples to do still more work. He said, *"Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31)*. For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. The Lord is not One who sees only the needs of the crowds; He also knows the circumstances of the disciples who serve. He did not condemn resting as laziness, nor did He set up the state of having no time even to eat as the normal standard of faith.

This word teaches balance to those who serve the work of the gospel. Ministry is not a contest to prove our strength. Nor are we faithful only when we run until we collapse from exhaustion. The disciple must return to the Lord, tell Him what he has done and taught, listen to the Lord's word, and receive the rest the Lord grants. Rest, too, must be not a time of drifting

away from the Lord, but a time of going with the Lord to a deserted place.

But the passage does not say that the plan for rest is always carried out the way we expect. Many people who saw Jesus and His disciples going apart by boat ran there on foot from all the cities and arrived first. The disciples had clear reason to rest, and the multitude could look like an intrusion on that rest. Yet the passage does not invent and explain the disciples' inner thoughts. It only shows how Jesus responded when He came out of the boat and saw the great multitude.

Jesus knew both the needs of those who serve and the needs of the multitude that had come. His word telling the disciples to rest is true, and His heart of compassion for the multitude is also true. We must not erase either of the two. The church must not treat its workers' bodies and hearts as expendable on the ground that it is serving people. Conversely, we must not always regard shepherdless people as nothing but a tiresome interruption on the ground that we need rest. We must return to the Lord and learn the order of resting and serving within His wisdom and His supply.

He saw the multitude not as numbers but as sheep without a shepherd

Jesus saw the great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. The passage does not tell one by one why each person in the multitude had come. Nor can we invent what feelings they ran there with or what circumstances they carried. But how Jesus saw them is clear. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd, was moved with compassion for them, and taught them many things.

Jesus had compassion on the multitude and taught them

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many things. After the hour had grown late, He told the disciples to give them something to eat, and He fed them to the full with the loaves and the fish. Mark records first His teaching and then His actually feeding them. We must not borrow this order to erase the needs of the body or to omit the word; we must receive both facts, that Jesus taught and that He fed.

The church's way of looking at people must also learn from the Lord's way of looking. If we count the gathered numbers only as results, or see a person asking for help only as a burden, we miss the need of each soul. Conversely, if we meet only the needs of the body and do not deliver the word of life, we leave out the shepherd's most important feeding. The Lord taught, and then He fed. He did not pull the word and practical care apart and set them against each other.

Sheep without a shepherd cannot secure both their destination and their safety by their own strength. Yet this figure must not be used as a ground for passively controlling people. In the passage, Jesus taught the multitude, had them sit down in groups on the green grass, and fed them with the loaves and the fish. The workers of the church, likewise, must not try to make people their own possession, but must lead them before the word of Jesus. The most precious thing we can give is not power that makes people follow us, but the word of life the Lord has given.

Jesus saw the great multitude, was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and taught them many things. The preacher of the gospel, too, must examine his own standard before this record. We must not calculate the other person only as a result of ministry, but serve with the hope that the soul lost because of sin will hear the word of God and gain life. This service must come not from human superiority, but from the thanksgiving that we, too, were saved by the Lord's compassion.

The command given in the face of the judgment to send them away

Time passed and the hour grew late. The place was a deserted place. The disciples observed the situation and proposed sending the multitude away to buy themselves something to eat in the surrounding country and villages. Their words carried information about the actual circumstances. The hour was late, and in the deserted place there was nowhere the multitude could easily get food. The disciples were not blind to the problem; they saw the problem exactly. But the solution they had in mind was to send the multitude away from that spot.

The answer of Jesus was different from what the disciples expected. He said, *"You give them something to eat."* The Lord brought the responsibility for the multitude before the disciples. The disciples asked back whether they should buy two hundred denarii worth of bread. The passage does not say whether they actually had that money. We need not attach to the disciples' calculation motives the passage does not disclose. What is clear is that they saw a scale they could not manage, and that Jesus commanded them to take part.

We, too, can be good at discovering needs while sending the responsibility far away. We think someone ought to deliver the word to that person, but I do not open my mouth. We say someone ought to help a neighbor in hardship, but I do not look at the time and the hands I have. We say it is the church's work to do, while I stand like a spectator detached from the church. Then the Lord asks where we stand, with the words He spoke to the disciples. The command to give them something to eat does not mean that we are to become the masters of the supply; it is the calling to take part in the Lord's supply.

This command must not be turned into a slogan to break

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through the impossible by human will. The disciples did not produce the bread themselves. The power that fed the multitude to the full belongs to Jesus. The disciples' role was not to take the place of the Lord's power, but to set before the people what the Lord had given. Therefore, when we speak of the responsibility of service, we must not exaggerate human ability. We are neither saviors nor the source of life. We are only hands that faithfully deliver the word and the love the Savior has entrusted to us.

After commanding the disciples to give them something to eat, Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish, blessed them, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples. The disciples set them before the people. If we miss this order, service becomes a heavy work of self-proof. If I think I must change everyone and solve every need by my own strength, I grow proud or am easily discouraged. But when we know that the Lord is the Supplier and we are the ones who distribute, we can honestly acknowledge our limits and still not avoid the work entrusted to us.

Go and see; bring what you have before the Lord

Jesus told the disciples to go and see how many loaves there were. After finding out, the disciples told Him there were five loaves and two fish. The passage does not interpret this as some hidden number symbolism. Nor does the text of Mark say who first brought that food. The facts we must hold on to are that the disciples confirmed what was actually there, that it looked far too little to feed the great multitude, and that the food was placed in the hands of Jesus.

Faith is not a word that denies reality. It is the attitude that

honestly reports the number of loaves and fish one has, and yet does not discard the Lord's command because of that smallness. We must honestly examine the time, gifts, material means, health, and responsibilities we have. We must neither exaggerate them nor despise them for being small.

This honesty is needed in the church's service as well. If we promise to do what we cannot do, we disappoint people and wear out the community. Conversely, if we say we will do nothing until perfect conditions are in place, we lose the opportunity entrusted to us now. The disciples went and saw, and told Jesus what there was. Jesus had the people sit down, Himself blessed, and distributed the loaves and the fish.

This honesty is needed in preaching the word as well. It is not that we may open our mouths only when we can answer every question perfectly. It is enough to preach, according to the Scriptures, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that I clearly believe. Without pretending to know what we do not know, and without trying to force the other person to be persuaded, we must faithfully tell how Jesus took on sin and accomplished salvation. The One who opens people's hearts and gives life is the Lord. Our part is to deliver the word we have heard without deforming it.

Also, to examine what we have does not mean to compare ourselves with others. One person can serve by teaching, another by caring, another with material means and time, another with prayer and quiet labor. If we count only the conspicuous roles as precious, we end up despising the various hands the Lord has distributed to the community. What matters is not putting forward something big, but using what the Lord has entrusted according to the Lord's will.

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The Lord broke and gave, and the disciples set it before the people

Jesus had all the people sit down in groups on the green grass, and they sat down in hundreds and in fifties. The passage records that after places were arranged in this way, Jesus blessed and gave the loaves to the disciples to set before the people. In the church's service, too, what is needed is not order for controlling people, but order that helps the entrusted care reach each person.

Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish and looked up to heaven and blessed them. Then He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the people, and He also divided the fish among them all. The beginning of the supply was with Jesus. The disciples' hands were not hands that produced a miracle out of emptiness, but hands that received from Jesus and passed on to the people. We must not confuse the source with the channel.

This distinction is very important in gospel ministry. It is not the preacher of the gospel who removes people's sins. Nor does the church manufacture salvation. Jesus accomplished the whole work of the remission of sins, and the church delivers that completed news to the world. If the one who delivers exalts himself as though he were the source of life, he binds people to himself rather than to Jesus. Conversely, if he withdraws, saying he is nothing and so has nothing to do, he abandons the responsibility of distribution the Lord has entrusted. We are not the source, but we are the channel the Lord uses.

The disciples set before the people what they had received from Jesus. They were not the source of the supply but distributors who obeyed the Lord's command. The church today, likewise, must not exalt itself as the source of life, but deliver the news Jesus has completed. One may speak directly to close

family, or care for neighbors, or pray for the preaching of the gospel and share material means and time. Though each one's place differs, we must not turn the glory of salvation to ourselves, but faithfully carry out the work entrusted to us.

Even so, we must not judge faithfulness by the size of visible results. That the great multitude ate in this passage reveals the power of Jesus. It is not a promise that large numbers must always appear in our ministry today for the Lord to be with us. Whether we preach to many or to one, we must not package results we cannot control as our achievement. We must examine whether we received from the Lord and delivered truthfully, whether we served in love without using people, and whether we did not exchange the gospel for another message.

Salvation completed before service

Before speaking of the responsibility of service, we must make clear who it is that saves. It is not that human good deeds and service are gathered up to pay the price of sin. Jesus, the Son of God, took on the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist; bearing that sin, He hung on the Cross, was judged, and died, and He rose from the dead. Jesus accomplished a perfect salvation to which man has no need to add anything.

By believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, a person receives the remission of sins, by which all his sins are removed once and for all, and he receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, is born again, and becomes a child of God. An evangelist cannot believe on someone's behalf, nor does the church's service wash away sin. Each person must believe with his own heart the facts Jesus has accomplished. Therefore

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preaching the gospel is not the work of making a person into our community's achievement; it is the work of handing him the word so that he may hear and believe the completed salvation of Jesus.

In Mark chapter 6 the disciples were not the source of the supply but the people who passed on what Jesus gave. In the same way, the gospel worker is not the source of salvation. We are not used because we are sinless and outstanding; we first believe the salvation Jesus accomplished and receive the remission of sins, and then deliver that news to others. The right starting point of gospel preaching is not superiority but thanksgiving for grace.

This gospel cannot be bought with money or earned by human merit. That does not mean, however, that all the labor and expense needed to preach the gospel disappear. Someone gives time, someone offers material means, someone translates, teaches, and visits. But that labor must not become a transaction to collect the price of salvation. We must not make the freely received news of life a means of profit, but deliver it with the hope that the other person will believe in Jesus and receive the remission of sins.

Service that follows grace, not a condition for salvation

The disciples' distributing the bread to the multitude did not mean they bought salvation by that act. Neither does our preaching the gospel and serving the church today make that labor the price of the remission of sins. The Scripture says, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8)*. It then goes on

to state plainly, *"Not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:9)*.

The cause of salvation is the work Jesus completed. We receive it by faith. The hours served, the number of people reached, the material offered, the hardship endured—these do not supplement salvation. If we make such things conditions for salvation, the one who has worked much boasts, the one who has worked little is condemned, and the completed salvation of Jesus is pushed to the back. Just as the disciples' hands were not the source of the bread, our service is not the source of salvation.

Yet the conclusion that since we are saved by grace we need do nothing at all is not the meaning of Scripture either. In the same place the Scripture says, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10)*. The person saved by grace walks among the good works God has prepared. Works stand not before salvation as a condition that pays its price, but after salvation as fruit that reveals grace.

This order sets the worker free. It frees us from the fear that unless I serve much, God will cast me away. At the same time, it keeps us from using the claim of being already saved as an excuse to turn away from the needs of others. Because we are people loved by the Lord and have received the remission of our sins, we gladly reach out our hands. When we grow weary at times, we return to the Lord and rest, and serve again with the strength the Lord gives. Without rashly condemning one another for slow fruit, we encourage one another so that the grace received flows on into love and the preaching of the gospel.

Church service must be examined by the same standard. We must not pressure people as though they cannot be saved unless they take on a particular role. Nor should we teach that the person who has devoted more obtains a greater salvation.

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Conversely, we must not always pass the community's needs on to others while speaking only of grace. Each person should take part willingly according to the gifts and circumstances received from the Lord, without putting forward his own labor as righteousness. The hand that sets before people what it has received from the Lord is not a boasting hand but a thankful hand.

All ate and were filled, and there was some left over

The passage records that all the people ate and were filled. The leftover fragments of bread and the fish, too, were gathered, filling twelve baskets. What the disciples first confirmed was five loaves and two fish, but what they saw at the end was a multitude fed to the full and baskets filled up. This result shows not the disciples' powers of calculation but the full supply of Jesus. The passage stresses again and again that all ate and were filled.

We must not use this event as a promise that automatically guarantees material abundance. It is not a formula that if we believe in Jesus, our storehouses will always overflow and every business will succeed. The passage shows Jesus, who had compassion on the multitude without a shepherd and met their actual need. We should believe His compassion and His power, but not demand particular material results as the evidence of faith.

Neither should we turn the amount left over, without ground, into some secret meaning. What the passage makes clear is that in a situation that looked like shortage, everyone ate and something remained. The Lord's supply was sufficient to meet the actual need of the multitude. Rather than adding to the

number twelve baskets a meaning the passage does not disclose, we should stay within the record that all ate and were filled and that what remained was gathered up.

What the disciples first confirmed was five loaves and two fish. After Jesus broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples set them before the people, everyone ate their fill and twelve baskets remained. This result came from the supply of Jesus. Since the disciples had only passed on what was given, they could not credit any achievement to their own ability. In our service today, likewise, we must not give up in advance looking only at the size of our resources, nor turn the results that are accomplished to our own name.

The disciples gathered the leftover fragments of bread and the fish, filling twelve baskets. From beginning to end it was Jesus who commanded, blessed, and gave, and the passage records that after all had eaten there was still something left. We must not exaggerate results or exalt an individual's name, but testify of the compassion and the power of Jesus, who fed the multitude.

Not one who sends people away, but one who receives from the Lord's hand and passes it on

Before us, too, there are deserted places of many kinds. There is the person who has lost direction because he does not know the word, the person who carries the burden of sin yet does not know how to receive the remission of sins, the person who asks for help but does not know where to go. We can look at the circumstances and only make the judgment of sending them somewhere else. But the Lord first has us see them as sheep without a shepherd, and He tells us to give them something to eat.

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Before this word we have no need to hide the smallness of our strength. We need only go and see, and honestly tell the Lord. My knowledge may be small, my time limited, my body weak. Yet there is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has already given. The person who has believed this gospel and received the remission of sins can deliver the word he has received to another.

The Lord told the disciples to come aside to a deserted place and rest a while. But at the place they crossed over to, the multitude had arrived first, and Jesus had compassion on them and taught them. Therefore the weary should not drive themselves on in guilt, but seek the Lord's command and His care. At the same time, when we meet an unexpected need, we should not try to bear it by our own strength alone, but look to the Lord, the Supplier.

We must not try to obtain salvation by the labor we do. We must not make gospel preaching, service, and offerings the price of the remission of sins. At the same time, we must not use the claim of having received grace as an excuse to avoid the responsibility of service. As befits those who have first received life from the Lord, let us have compassion on shepherdless souls, teach the word, care for actual needs, and share the gospel of the water and the Spirit truthfully. Though our hands are small, they are used as hands that carry what the Lord gives.

The One who fed the multitude to the full is Jesus. The disciples received from His hand and set it before the people. Let us engrave this order on our hearts. The supply belongs to the Lord, and the responsibility of taking part has been given to us. The glory of salvation must be turned to Jesus alone. With the fruit of the grace they have received, the church and the saints must teach and care for the people without a shepherd, and faithfully deliver the gospel and the love entrusted to them. ✉

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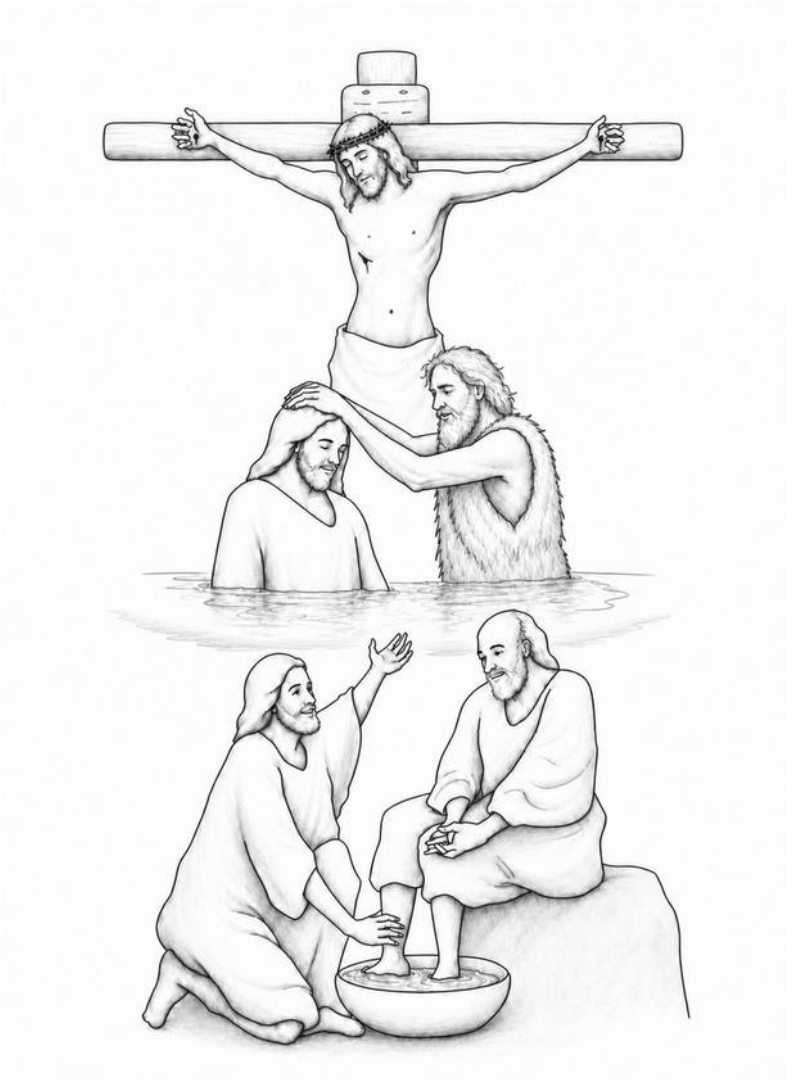

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Mark Chapter 7

< Mark 7:1-37 >

"Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.' He said to them, 'All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban'—' (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the

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word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.' When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, 'Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!' When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. So He said to them, 'Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?' And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.' From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, 'Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.' And she answered and said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs.' Then He said to her, 'For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.' And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her

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daughter lying on the bed. Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, 'He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'"

1) Summary of the entire content

Mark chapter 7 records how Jesus criticized the tradition of the elders held by the Pharisees and the scribes, taught that what defiles a man is not unwashed hands or food from outside but the sin that comes out of the heart, and then cast the demon out of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter and healed a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. The Pharisees and the scribes blamed the disciples for eating food without the ceremonial washing of hands, but Jesus rebuked them for keeping the tradition of men while laying aside the commandment of God. In particular, He pointed out the contradiction of using the tradition of *"Corban"*—declaring something a gift to God—to evade the responsibility of honoring one's parents. Jesus said that the evil thoughts,

fornication, theft, murder, covetousness, and the like that come out of a man's heart defile him. Afterward, in the Gentile region of Tyre, when the Syro-Phoenician woman pleaded with Him to heal her demon-possessed daughter, Jesus received her humble and persistent answer and healed the daughter. In the region of Decapolis He said *"Ephphatha"* to a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and opened his ears and tongue. This chapter shows that realizing the sin of the heart matters more than outward religious forms, and that the compassion and power of Jesus reach beyond the boundary of the Jews to Gentiles and neglected people.

1. The Pharisees and the scribes who made an issue of unwashed hands (verses 1–5)

The Pharisees and the scribes who had come down from Jerusalem gathered to Jesus. They saw some of His disciples eat food with defiled, that is, unwashed hands.

Here, washing the hands does not mean only the ordinary washing of hands for hygiene. It was tied to the ceremonial rules of purification that the Pharisees and the Jews practiced according to the tradition of the elders. They kept many traditions, such as washing themselves after returning from the marketplace and washing cups, pitchers, and copper vessels.

The Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus why His disciples did not follow the tradition of the elders but ate food with unwashed hands. Their interest lay not in the disciples' hearts or in actual sin, but in whether the prescribed rituals and traditions had been kept.

Washing hands and vessels clean for hygiene is a necessary thing. What Jesus criticized was not hygienic cleanness, but the attitude of making a man-made ritual absolute, as though it were God's command, and judging other people's faith by it.

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2. The hypocrisy of honoring God with the lips only (verses 6–8)

Jesus quoted the words of Isaiah and rebuked them as hypocrites. They honored God with their lips, but their heart was far from God.

Hypocrisy means that the outward appearance and the actual state of the heart are different. One can look devout before people and keep religious rules well, while in the heart valuing one's own greed and gain above the word of God.

Jesus said that they worshiped God in vain because they taught the commandments of men as doctrines. Tradition itself is not always wrong. There can be good traditions formed for the order and benefit of a community. But it becomes a problem when the tradition of men is raised to the same authority as the word of God, or when God's command is refused because of tradition.

True worship does not lie in getting the outward form right. It lies in fearing God with the heart, believing His word, and living according to that word. Since one's heart can drift far from God even while using many religious expressions, we must examine our faith honestly.

3. Evading the honoring of parents through the tradition of Corban (verses 9–13)

Jesus spoke of a concrete case in which the Pharisees and the scribes forsook the commandment of God in order to keep their own tradition. God commanded that parents be honored, and He dealt severely with insulting one's parents.

In those days, however, there was a tradition that if a person declared the property that should be used to support his parents to be *"Corban,"* that is, a gift offered to God, he did not have to use that property for his parents. Under a religious pretext,

one could evade the actual responsibility of serving one's parents.

Saying that something is given to God sounds devout, but if it is used as a tool for breaking God's command to honor one's parents, it cannot be right devotion. We must not abandon our rightful responsibility and love toward our family on the ground of serving God.

Jesus said that they made the word of God of no effect through the tradition they had handed down, and that they did many such things. The genuineness of faith is revealed through actual obedience more than through words and rituals. Using the name of God to evade one's responsibilities or protect one's interests is hypocrisy.

4. What defiles a man is not what enters from outside (verses 14–16)

Jesus called the multitude again and told them all to hear Him and understand. He said that what enters a man's body from outside cannot defile him, and that what comes out of a man defiles him.

This word does not mean that there is no food at all that is harmful to hygiene or health. Jesus taught that food does not make a man's heart morally sinful. The mere fact of eating with unwashed hands or eating a particular food does not make a person's heart evil before God.

Because the Pharisees thought that unclean things entering from outside defiled a person, they valued washing rituals and food regulations. But Jesus said that man's fundamental problem is not outside but within the heart.

A person can blame his surroundings and other people while failing to see the problem within himself. But the thoughts, desires, and intentions of sin come out of a man's

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heart. Changing outward forms alone cannot solve the fundamental sin of the heart.

5. The evil things that come out of a man's heart (verses 17–23)

When Jesus left the multitude and entered a house, His disciples asked Him the meaning of the parable. Jesus explained that food does not enter a man's heart but enters his stomach and passes out of the body. Mark makes clear by this word that Jesus declared all foods clean. It is not what food one eats that determines a person's moral cleanness; what matters is what comes out of the heart.

Jesus said that out of a man's heart come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. Such evil does not come in by chance from outside and defile a man; it already exists within the human heart.

Sin begins in the thoughts and desires of the heart before it appears in action. People may count only great crimes that appear outwardly as sin, but Jesus pointed to covetousness, envy, pride, and evil thoughts as sins of the heart as well.

Therefore man's fundamental problem is not solved by washing hands or keeping more outward rules. As long as sin comes out of the heart, outward devoutness alone cannot make anyone clean before God. Man needs the word that exposes the sin of the heart, and the grace of God that fundamentally solves that sin.

6. The Syro-Phoenician woman who came to Jesus in a Gentile region (verses 24–26)

Jesus went to the region of Tyre and entered a house. He wanted no one to know He was there, but the report of Him could

not be hidden. A woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard the news of Jesus, came, and fell at His feet.

This woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth. Since she was not a Jew but a Gentile, she had none of the outward privileges of the covenant people. Yet she brought her daughter's problem to Jesus and kept pleading with Him to cast out the demon.

The woman did not put forward her background or qualifications. Knowing that she could not solve her daughter's problem by her own strength, she relied on the compassion and the power of Jesus. Parents can love their children, but they do not have the power to save them from every suffering. This woman acknowledged her limits and asked Jesus for help.

7. The crumbs that even the dogs under the table eat (verses 27–30)

Jesus said that the children must first be filled, and that it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. This word indicates that the history of salvation was proceeding first with Israel at its center.

The woman did not push back against the words of Jesus, nor did she claim that she deserved to receive help. She answered, *"Yes, Lord,"* and said that even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.

While acknowledging the words of Jesus, the woman believed that His grace was abundant enough to reach even her and her daughter. She did not claim that she was qualified; she relied on the compassion of Jesus, which can be bestowed even on the unqualified.

Jesus said that because of that answer the demon had gone out of her daughter. When the woman returned home, the child was lying on the bed, and the demon had already gone out.

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Jesus cast out the demon by His word alone, without going to the place in person.

This event shows that the grace of God is not confined within the boundaries of blood and nation. Even a Gentile receives grace when she humbles herself, believes the compassion of Jesus, and comes to Him.

8. Taking aside the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech (verses 31–34)

Jesus left the region of Tyre, passed through Sidon and the region of Decapolis, and came to the Sea of Galilee. People brought a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech and begged Jesus to lay His hand on him.

Jesus took the man aside from the multitude. He did not make him a spectacle or an instrument for a miracle before many people, but met him personally.

Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed and said, "*Ephphatha.*" This means "*Be opened.*"

The sigh of Jesus shows His deep compassion toward human beings lying under suffering and disability. Jesus did not treat the man's suffering with indifference, but drew near to him in the way his need required.

9. The ears opened and the tongue loosed by the word *"Ephphatha"* (verses 34–35).

When Jesus said, "*Ephphatha,*" the man's ears were opened and his tongue was loosed, and he came to speak plainly. The ears no human power could open and the tongue no human power could loose were fully restored by the word of Jesus.

His inability to speak was connected with his inability to

hear. If one cannot hear sounds, it is hard to learn accurate speech. When his ears were opened first, his tongue was also loosed so that he could speak rightly.

This makes us think of the importance of hearing the word of God. If a person does not hear the right word, it is hard for him to confess rightly concerning God and Jesus. The hearing ear must be opened first; then, after receiving the word heard into the heart, one must confess the truth with the mouth.

The One who healed the ears and the tongue was Jesus. A person must humbly ask in order to understand the word of God, and after coming to understand, he must deliver to others the grace and the truth he has received.

10. The people who confessed, *"He has done all things well"* (verses 36–37).

Jesus commanded them to tell no one about this. But the more He forbade them, the more widely the people proclaimed it. Their amazement and joy were so great.

His telling them not to make it known can be seen as intended to prevent the miracle itself from being mistaken for the whole of His mission. If people follow Jesus merely as a man of power who heals diseases and solves practical problems, they can miss His word and His saving work.

The people were astonished beyond measure and said, *"He has done all things well."* Jesus made the deaf hear and the mute speak. This expression calls to mind the record of Genesis, where God saw all that He had created and said that it was good.

Jesus is the Son of God, who restores people in a world broken by sin and disease. His ministry does not lie merely in displaying amazing power, but in saving sinners from sin and judgment and restoring the suffering with compassion.

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The core meaning of Mark chapter 7

First, the Pharisees and the scribes kept the tradition of the elders while forsaking the commandment of God, and Jesus rebuked this hypocrisy.

Second, the traditions of men can be helpful, but they must not hold the same authority as the word of God or become a standard that nullifies God's command.

Third, evading the responsibility of serving one's parents under the religious pretext of giving to God is not true godliness but hypocrisy.

Fourth, what defiles a man before God is not unwashed hands or particular foods, but the evil thoughts and sins that come out of the heart.

Fifth, outward rituals and rules cannot solve the sin of the heart, and man needs the grace of God that makes the heart fundamentally clean.

Sixth, the Syro-Phoenician woman did not assert her own qualification; she acknowledged the words of Jesus and relied on His abundant compassion.

Seventh, the grace of Jesus was bestowed beyond the boundary of nation and blood on the Gentile who humbled herself and came in faith.

Eighth, Jesus met the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech privately, looked closely into his suffering, and restored him completely with the word *"Ephphatha."*

Ninth, only when the ear that rightly hears the word of God is opened can a person realize who Jesus is and confess the truth rightly.

Summed up in one sentence, Mark chapter 7 is the chapter that makes clear that the traditions of men and outward rites of purification cannot solve the sin of the heart, makes us face the

sin that comes out of the heart, and shows the power of Jesus, who bestows grace across every boundary on those who come to Him not by lineage or qualification but in humble faith, and who opens closed ears and tongues and restores them.

2) Mark chapter 7 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Mark chapter 7 makes clear that the religious traditions men have made and outward rites of purification cannot wash away the sin of the heart, and shows that only Jesus can solve the fundamental sin that comes out of the human heart. The Pharisees and the scribes were zealous for the rituals of washing hands and vessels, but they could not solve the greed, pride, and evil that came out of their hearts. The way a person's heart is made clean is not repeated purification rituals or prayers of repentance, but believing the fact that Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes clean before God. The Syro-Phoenician woman did not assert her own qualification but acknowledged the words of Jesus and sought His compassion, and the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech had his ears and tongue opened by the word of Jesus. This shows that a sinner must acknowledge his true self before the word of God, have his ears opened to hear the gospel and believe the salvation Jesus has accomplished, and testify of that grace with his mouth.

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1. Outward washing cannot wash away the sin of the heart (verses 1–5)

The Pharisees and the scribes made an issue of the disciples of Jesus eating food without washing their hands according to the tradition of the elders. To them, whether the outward rite of purification had been kept was more important than the sin of the heart.

What Jesus criticized was not the washing of hands for hygiene. Washing hands and vessels clean is necessary for health and daily life. Jesus rebuked the attitude of assigning spiritual cleansing power to a man-made ritual and judging those who did not keep it to be unclean before God.

However many times one washes one's hands with water, the evil thoughts, greed, and pride that come out of the heart do not disappear. One can tidy up one's outward conduct and lead a faithful religious life, but that alone does not erase the sins already committed or remove the root of sin.

The water by which a sinner becomes clean before God is not a ceremonial washing performed by man. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the water refers to the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist. Though Jesus was without sin, He went to John to have the sins of all mankind passed onto His own body, and afterward He carried the sin of the world to the Cross.

The Pharisees tried to become clean by washing their own hands, but the gospel testifies that Jesus took on all the sins of sinners in their place and made them clean. Outward rituals are performed by man himself, but the remission of sins is received by believing what Jesus accomplished for sinners.

2. The devoutness of the lips and the faith of the heart (verses 6–8)

Jesus quoted the words of Isaiah and said that the Pharisees and the scribes honored God with their lips but their heart was far from God. They knew religious words and rituals well, but they valued the tradition of men above the word of God.

A person can say with his mouth that he believes in Jesus while still thinking that sin remains in his heart. If he believes that, since he sins daily, he can only remain a sinner until the moment he dies, he has not received into his heart the word that Jesus has completely removed all sins.

True faith is the confession of the lips and the belief of the heart agreeing with each other. If Jesus said that He took on all the sins of mankind, we must believe that all our sins were actually passed on to Him. If Jesus received all the judgment of sin on the Cross, we must believe that no judgment of sin remains for us to receive again.

The person who honors God with the heart exalts God's word above his own thoughts. Looking at his own feelings and deeds, he may seem lacking and feel like a sinner, but he believes the word of God, who has declared him righteous on the ground of the salvation Jesus completed.

This is not a claim that even wrong conduct is right. It is acknowledging one's wrongs as wrongs and turning from them, while believing the fact that Jesus took on and was judged even for those sins. The status of salvation rests on the merit of Jesus, and the life after salvation follows the word in gratitude for that grace.

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3. The tradition of men cannot take the place of the gospel (verses 9–13)

The Pharisees and the scribes used the tradition of Corban to evade the responsibility of serving their parents. They used the devout-sounding words of giving to God, but in fact they nullified God's command to honor parents.

Human traditions and institutions can help the order of a community. But no tradition can rise above the word of God. Even a religious custom long practiced must be corrected by the standard of the word if it differs from the salvation the Scriptures testify to.

The teaching that the sins committed each day are washed away only if one offers prayers of repentance daily must also be examined against the complete salvation the Scriptures testify to. If sins one failed to confess just before death remained, no one could be sure of complete salvation. Moreover, since human memory has limits, it is also impossible to remember and confess every sin one has committed without omission.

The gospel testifies not that man washes his sins away by remembering them one by one, but that Jesus took on all the sins of the world once and for all with the baptism He received from John. Carrying all those sins, He received one everlasting judgment on the Cross, and He rose from the dead and completed salvation.

True repentance is not unconditionally holding on to a tradition long kept. It is turning back from a faith different from the word of God and returning to the salvation Jesus accomplished. Laying down one's own righteousness and religious merits and believing the righteousness of God is gospel repentance.

4. The sin that defiles a man comes out of the heart (verses 14–16)

Jesus said that it is not what enters a man from outside that defiles him, but what comes out of a man that defiles him. Man's fundamental problem lies not in his surroundings or food but in the heart that produces sin.

A person may think he sinned because of a bad environment or another person's behavior. Surroundings and other people can be stimuli or temptations to sin, but it is a man's heart that responds to the stimulus and produces hatred, greed, and evil thoughts.

Human beings are born as descendants of Adam with the propensity of sin from birth. A person does not become a sinner by committing sin for the first time; because he is born a sinner, he bears the fruits of sin in heart and deed as he grows. Creating good surroundings and teaching right conduct are necessary, but they cannot fundamentally remove the sin in the heart.

A person must first lay down the pride of thinking himself better than others. There may be differences in outward conduct, but in that evil thoughts and desires come out of every person's heart, no one can call himself righteous.

The purpose of acknowledging one's sinfulness is not to despair or to torment oneself. It is to discover the sin one cannot solve by one's own strength, and to come to Jesus, who took on all that sin.

5. The twelve evils that come out of the heart, and the essence of man (verses 17–23)

Jesus said that out of a man's heart come evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. Such

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evil comes out from within a man and defiles him.

People easily think that only murder and theft, which appear in action, are great sins. But Jesus pointed also to the evil thoughts, covetousness, envy, and pride that arise in the heart before action as sin. Examined in the light of the word of God, no one can claim to be righteous by his deeds and his heart.

The role of the Law is to make a person realize his sin. When he holds his heart and conduct up to the mirror of the Law, he comes to know how many sins he lives with. But just as a mirror can show the dirt on a face yet cannot wash it off, the Law exposes sin but cannot remove it.

The person who has realized his sin must believe the fact that Jesus took on all the sins that come out of the heart and the conduct with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Jesus took over not only the sins a person has already committed but all the sins he will commit in weakness throughout his life, and He paid the full price of those sins on the Cross.

The person who believes this gospel does not become righteous because his deeds are perfect. Though weakness and evil thoughts may still rise in his heart, he becomes a righteous person without sin before God because all his sins were passed on to Jesus and judged.

This does not mean that sin may be taken lightly or committed at will. When evil thoughts come out from within, the saved person acknowledges that they are not right, gives thanks that Jesus took on even those sins, and turns from that wrong, following the word.

6. How Jesus washed away all the sins of the heart (the gospel connection of verses 17–23)

Mark chapter 7 makes clear that sin comes out of a man's heart, but how Jesus removed all that sin is known more clearly through the testimony of the whole Bible.

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of an unblemished sacrificial offering and passed his sins onto it. The offering that received the sins shed its blood and died in the sinner's place. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest, representing the people of Israel, passed the people's sins onto the sacrificial offering by laying his hands on it.

In the New Testament, Jesus went to John, who represented mankind, and took on the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John. The words of Matthew 3:15, *"for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,"* show that through this work Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of God, who saves sinners.

Jesus carried the sin of the world He had so taken on and went to the Cross. The blood of the Cross reveals God's just judgment that the wages of sin is death. Jesus did not die because of His own sin; He was judged in the sinner's place because of the sins of mankind He had taken on beforehand.

By rising from the dead, Jesus revealed that He is the Son of God and that He has completed salvation. The water, the blood, and the Spirit are not three separate gospels but testify of one complete salvation. The water testifies that Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist; the blood, that He received the judgment on those sins on the Cross; and the Spirit, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and in His essence God the Creator.

When we believe this gospel, we come to know that all the

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sins that come out of the heart have already been passed on to Jesus and judged. The remission of sins is not a psychological self-suggestion that forces the heart to feel clean; it rests on the word that our sins were actually passed on to Jesus and judged.

7. The word declaring all foods clean, and true cleanness (verses 18–19)

Jesus said that food does not enter a man's heart but enters his stomach and passes out of the body. Mark makes clear through this that Jesus declared all foods clean.

This word does not mean that no food is harmful to hygiene or health. Food can affect the health of the body, but it cannot create sin in a man's heart and make him unclean before God. Spiritual cleanness is not decided by the kind of food or by ceremonial washing.

The person who is clean before God is not the one who has kept every outward regulation perfectly, but the one who believes the fact that Jesus removed all his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. When by this faith a person becomes one without sin in his heart, the Holy Spirit comes upon him.

The Holy Spirit is not One who dwells together with sin in a heart where sin remains as it is. He comes upon the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel that Jesus washed away all sins, and He seals that person as a child of God.

After that, the Holy Spirit enables the believer to understand the word of God, discerns the thoughts of the flesh rising in the heart, and leads him to live a righteous life. Living according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit is not a condition for obtaining the remission of sins, but the fruit of faith borne by the person who has already received it.

8. The Syro-Phoenician woman who acknowledged, *"Yes, Lord"* (verses 24–28).

The Syro-Phoenician woman came to Jesus for her demon-possessed daughter. Jesus said that the children must first be filled, and that it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

This word indicates that the history of salvation was proceeding first with Israel at its center. At the same time, it brought to light what attitude the woman would take before the words of Jesus. The woman neither claimed that she deserved to receive grace nor pushed back against His words.

The woman answered, *"Yes, Lord."* She relied not on her own qualification but on the compassion of Jesus. She believed that the grace and the power of Jesus were so abundant that even the crumbs of the children's bread would be enough to solve her daughter's problem.

For a sinner to be saved, he must first acknowledge that God's judgment is right. If God says that all men are under sin and cannot be saved by their own deeds, we must acknowledge, "Yes, Lord. I am a sinner, and without Your grace I cannot but be judged."

After that, we must also respond, *"Yes, Lord,"* to the word of salvation that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Even if in our own thinking we still seem to have sin, if God says that He has removed all sin in Jesus, we must believe that word.

The attitude of humbling oneself does not itself become the merit of salvation. Humility is the heart that acknowledges it has no qualification and accepts the grace of Jesus. The ground of salvation is still the gospel Jesus completed.

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9. The abundant grace that reached even a Gentile (verses 29–30)

Jesus heard the woman's answer and said that the demon had gone out of her daughter. When the woman returned home, just as Jesus had said, the demon had already gone out and her daughter was lying on the bed.

Jesus healed the daughter by His word without going to the house in person. The woman believed the words of Jesus and went home before confirming the result with her eyes. Faith is not acknowledging something after all the visible evidence has appeared; it is trusting the word of Jesus.

The grace of God is not shut up within the lineage of the Jews. In the sin of the world that Jesus took on are included the sins of Jews and Gentiles, of men and women, of those reckoned good and those reckoned evil.

Therefore whoever acknowledges that he is a sinner and believes the gospel Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of sins. Race and nation, social position and past conduct do not determine one's qualification for salvation.

Even though the sins of all people were passed on to Jesus, not all people are automatically saved. One must hear the fact of the salvation Jesus accomplished and receive it with the heart. Salvation is not a reward earned by human merit but the grace of God received by faith.

10. Only when closed ears are opened can one believe the gospel (verses 31–35)

People brought to Jesus a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. Jesus took him aside from the multitude, touched his ears and his tongue, and after looking up

to heaven and sighing, said, *"Ephphatha,"* that is, *"Be opened."*

This event was an actual healing of a man with hearing and speech difficulties. A bodily disability must not be interpreted as a sign of sin or lack of faith. Jesus did not condemn him or make him a spectacle; He met him privately and healed him with careful attention.

Applied to the gospel, the closed ear makes us think of the spiritual state of hearing the word of God and yet failing to understand. When a person is held fast by his own thoughts and wrong teachings, he can hear how Jesus removed sin and still fail to receive it into his heart.

That the ear to hear the gospel is opened means not simply hearing sounds but understanding the meaning of the word. It means coming to understand and believe the fact that Jesus took on all one's sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on those sins on the Cross, and rose again.

After the ear is opened, the tongue must also be loosed. The person who has believed the gospel should not confess that he is still a sinner; he should confess that although his deeds are lacking, he has become a righteous person without sin before God because Jesus removed all his sins.

Furthermore, it must not end with oneself receiving the remission of sins; we must deliver this gospel to others as well. To those who cannot hear spiritually, we should not offer only condemnation and blame, but pray that their ears may be opened and deliver the word of life accurately and patiently.

11. *"He has done all things well"* and the complete salvation (verses 36–37)

When Jesus healed the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, the people said, *"He has done all*

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things well." Jesus made the deaf hear and the mute speak.

This confession shows that what Jesus did was neither lacking nor wrong. Jesus did all things well even when He healed the diseases of the body, and He also accomplished perfectly the work of saving mankind from sin.

It is not that Jesus took on only part of sin with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, nor that He received only part of the punishment of sin on the Cross. Through the baptism He received from John He took on all the sins of mankind and received all the judgment on the Cross, and by rising from the dead He has perfected forever those who believe.

Therefore the believer must not try to complete his salvation by adding human merit to it. He must believe, just as the word says, the salvation Jesus has accomplished well, and give thanks. From that gratitude comes the life of serving God, loving one's neighbors, and preaching the gospel.

That the people spread the news widely even though Jesus told them not to was because the amazement they had received was great. Yet we must not preach Jesus merely as a miracle worker who solves the problems of the body. We must preach the fact that Jesus is the Savior, who took on all sins, was judged, and gives everlasting life.

The core meaning of Mark chapter 7 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, man's fundamental defilement comes not from unwashed hands or food but from the sin that comes out of the heart.

Second, outward rites of purification, religious traditions, good deeds, and repeated prayers of repentance cannot completely wash away the sin of the heart.

Third, the Law of God exposes the sin in man's heart and conduct, but the saving power that removes that sin belongs to Jesus.

Fourth, true repentance is forsaking one's own righteousness and wrong traditions, acknowledging that one is a fundamental sinner, and returning to the salvation Jesus completed.

Fifth, Jesus took on all the sins of mankind that come out of the heart and the conduct with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on those sins on the Cross, and rose again and completed salvation.

Sixth, the person who believes this gospel becomes a righteous person without sin before God not because his deeds are perfect but because Jesus removed all his sins, and the Holy Spirit comes upon his heart.

Seventh, like the Syro-Phoenician woman, the person who does not assert his own qualification but acknowledges that God's judgment is right and seeks the compassion of Jesus receives grace.

Eighth, the salvation of Jesus is not limited by nation, lineage, or social position, and whoever believes the completed gospel obtains the remission of sins and everlasting life.

Ninth, the restoration of the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech was an actual event of healing, and in the light of the gospel it makes us think that the ear must be opened to hear the word, believe the salvation, and confess the truth with the mouth.

Tenth, Jesus has completed all the work of salvation, and since there is no lack in the salvation by which He removed the sins of mankind, there is no need to add human merit or repeated sacrifices.

Summed up in one sentence, Mark chapter 7 is the chapter

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that shows that although the traditions of men and outward rituals cannot wash away the sin that comes out of the heart, Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and accomplished complete salvation through the Cross and the resurrection, so that the person who acknowledges his own sinfulness and, with ears opened to hear this gospel, believes it just as the word says receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit and comes to testify of that grace with his lips. ✉

Mark Chapter 7

Jesus Christ, who rebukes the tradition of men and brings to light the sin of the heart

Introduction

Mark chapter 7 is the chapter in which Jesus rebuked the religious leaders who put the tradition of men before the word of God, and made clear that the sin that defiles a man comes out of the heart. He then cast the demon out of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter and healed a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, revealing the compassion He bestows on Gentiles and suffering people as well.

The ritual of washing hands and outward regulations may be needed for hygiene or social order, but they cannot wash away the sin in a man's heart. Out of the human heart come many sins, including evil thoughts, desires, and pride. Therefore true faith lies not in decorating outward devoutness or repeating religious acts, but in acknowledging that one is a sinner by nature and believing the salvation God has prepared.

The Syro-Phoenician woman acknowledged her position and her lack, and yet relied on the compassion of Jesus. The healing of the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech shows that Jesus is the promised Christ and the Creator, who restores His creatures. Spiritually, too, man must not close his heart with his own thoughts and traditions, but hear the word of God and clearly testify of the salvation Jesus

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accomplished.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took on even all the sins that come out of the heart; He received the judgment on those sins on the Cross, and by rising again He accomplished complete salvation. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins not by outward rituals but by faith, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. This chapter teaches us to acknowledge the sin of our hearts before the word of God, to open our spiritual ears and hear the gospel, and to preach Jesus Christ with saved lips.

What defiles a man is not unwashed hands but the sin that comes out of the heart, and true cleanness is obtained when we believe the gospel God has accomplished

"Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: "This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as

doctrines the commandments of men." For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.' He said to them, 'All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother"; and, "He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death." But you say, "If a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban'—" (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.' When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, 'Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!' When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. So He said to them, 'Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?' And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man'" (Mark 7:1–23).

The Pharisees and the scribes who came from Jerusalem made an issue of the disciples of Jesus eating bread with unwashed hands. The hand-washing spoken of here does not mean merely the hygienic habit of removing dirt and germs.

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They considered that only by keeping the rites of purification handed down from the elders were they clean before God. When they returned from the marketplace they sprinkled themselves with water, and they washed even cups, pitchers, and copper vessels in the prescribed way. At first these may have been auxiliary rules meant to help keep the Law, but as time passed, the tradition of men came to occupy the same authority as the word of God.

Jesus did not say that the practice of washing hands clean is itself bad. Keeping hygiene is necessary. The problem lay in substituting outward washing and religious form for the cleanness of the heart, and in judging those who did not keep them to be unclean before God. The Pharisees examined the disciples' hands closely but did not see that their own hearts had drifted far from God. A person can keep his appearance neat and keep religious rules thoroughly while harboring pride, greed, and hatred within.

Jesus brought forward the words of Isaiah and rebuked them as hypocrites. Hypocrisy is when the words and conduct shown outwardly differ from the actual state of the heart. It is saying with the lips that one honors God while in the heart exalting one's own judgment and tradition more highly. Calling on God often and keeping the forms of worship with care does not necessarily make worship true. If one teaches the commandments of men as though they were God's will while actually forsaking the word of God, that worship becomes vain.

Not all tradition and order are wrong. There are good traditions that help the community and lead people to obey the word. But no tradition can rise above the Scriptures, nor can it become a condition of salvation. A thing does not become truth merely because it is old or because many people keep it. The teachings and customs of the church must also be examined in

the light of the word of God, and if they cloud the word or add human merit to the gospel, they must be laid down.

Jesus exposed their contradiction with the case of Corban. Corban means a gift offered to God. In those days some taught that if a person declared the property he owed to his parents to be given to God, he could be released from the responsibility of caring for them. Outwardly it looked like devotion to God, but in reality it became a means of evading the commandment, *"Honor your father and your mother."* A rule that makes people turn away from their parents in the name of serving God was not godliness; it was hypocrisy that nullified the word of God.

This word teaches that a religious pretext cannot justify disobedience. If a person abounds in worship, offerings, and service while turning away from the love and responsibility he owes his family and neighbors, he has lost the center of faith. The claim of giving to God must not become a shield that hides one's own greed. True faith is not using the name of God, but laying down one's own thoughts and interests before what God has said.

Jesus called the multitude again and said, *"Hear Me, everyone, and understand."* The fundamental cause that defiles a man before God is not the food that enters from outside but the sin that comes out from within him. Food enters the stomach and passes out of the body, so it cannot make a man's soul sinful. Jesus' declaring all foods clean made clear that ceremonial distinctions about food cannot be the standard that washes the sin of the heart. This does not mean that hygienic or health-related discernment about food is unnecessary.

People easily think they have become evil because of their surroundings or other people. Of course, surroundings and temptation can stir up the sin in the heart. But Jesus said that

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the root of sin is inside the human heart. Evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness all come out of the heart. This list does not describe only a few atrocious people; it exposes the sinful nature of every human being born as a descendant of Adam.

Some sins appear in action, and some lie hidden in thoughts and desires. Even without committing murder there is a heart that hates; even without stealing, one covets what belongs to another; even while looking humble outwardly, there is pride that exalts oneself. According to circumstances and opportunity, a person brings the sin that was in his heart out into action. Therefore no one can call himself clean because he has sinned less than others. Before the word of God, no one can put forward his own righteousness.

The Law thus exposes a man's sin but cannot wash it away. Just as washing hands and vessels countless times cannot remove the evil thoughts of the heart, repeating prayers of repentance, fasting, and good deeds does not erase the sins written in the heart. A person must first accept God's judgment and acknowledge that he is fundamentally a sinner who cannot escape the punishment of sin. This is the start of true repentance, which abandons trust in one's own deeds and seeks God's mercy and salvation.

To make clean the human being out of whose heart sin keeps coming, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth in the flesh. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took on the sins of all the people of the world onto His own body. Carrying those sins, He hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, receiving the wages and the judgment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again on the third day. It was not that the sinner washed his own heart; God

completely removed sin by the testimony of the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

The baptism of Jesus is not a religious act like the Pharisees' ceremonial washing of hands. It is not a rite by which a man washes his own body to become righteous; it is God's saving work in which, through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, all the sins of mankind were passed on to Jesus and He took them on. The Cross is the event in which He received the judgment on the sins He had so taken on, and the resurrection reveals that this salvation was accomplished perfectly. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of all sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is born again.

Evil thoughts and desires can arise in the flesh of the person who has received the remission of sins as well. Being born again does not mean that the propensity of the flesh itself disappears so that one is never tempted again. But because the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart, he does not simply follow his own thoughts; he discerns them in the light of the word, and when he does wrong, he can acknowledge the fact and turn back. Instead of hiding sin and posing as a person clean only on the outside, the saint must guard his heart with the gospel that has already washed away all his sins and live following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This section clearly shows what defiles a man and what makes him clean. The traditions of men and outward regulations can make conduct tidy, but they cannot remove the sin of the heart. When a person acknowledges, according to the word of God, the sinfulness that comes out from within him and believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed, he obtains the true remission of sins. Not honoring God with the lips only but receiving His salvation with the

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heart, exalting the word of God above the teachings of men, and expressing the grace received in love and obedience—this is true worship.

The Syro-Phoenician woman did not put forward her own qualification; she acknowledged the Lord's words, sought His compassion, and received an answer

"From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, 'Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.' And she answered and said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs.' Then He said to her, 'For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.' And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed" (Mark 7:24–30).

Jesus left the region of Galilee and went to the Gentile region of Tyre. He entered a house and wanted to stay unknown, but the report about Him could not be held back. His healing the sick, casting out demons, and preaching the word with authority had become widely known. Even though Jesus did not advertise Himself, people in suffering came looking for Him. Among them was a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit.

Mark notes that this woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth. She was not a Jew but a Gentile, and she did not belong to the nation that had directly received Israel's covenant and Law. Yet on hearing the report of Jesus, she came at once and fell at His feet. She carried her daughter's suffering as her own, believed that only Jesus could solve the problem, and asked for help. Falling at His feet was not mere courtesy; it showed the attitude of acknowledging her own helplessness and relying on the authority of Jesus.

The demon possession in this passage is an event in which an unclean spirit actually oppressed the young daughter. But this record must not be used as ground for concluding that every disease or mental suffering is demon possession. The Scriptures record disease and demonic oppression as distinct. If we tell suffering people today without qualification that they are demon-possessed, we misapply the passage and can wound them more deeply. Receiving needed treatment and care and praying to God do not conflict with each other.

To the woman's plea Jesus did not immediately give a gentle answer. He said, *"Let the children be filled first."* Here the children refer to Israel, who first received God's promise, and the bread represents the word and the grace of salvation delivered to them first. The public life of Jesus was carried out first among Israel according to the promise of the Old Testament. God was faithfully fulfilling the promise He had given to Abraham and his descendants.

But the word *"first"* does not mean that only Israel receives grace and Gentiles are forever excluded. It means there is an order, not that the door of grace is shut. That Jesus Himself entered a Gentile region and in the end granted this woman's plea shows this. God sent Christ into the world through Israel, but the salvation Christ accomplished must be delivered to all

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mankind, Jews and Gentiles alike.

The words *"it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs"* are not permission for people today to insult other peoples or the weak. Jesus used the distinction that existed at that time between Jews and Gentiles to bring to light what the woman would rely on in seeking grace. The expression carries the image not of a fierce dog roaming outside the house but of a little dog under the table inside the house. The word certainly called the woman to lowliness, but it is not a scene of driving her out completely and cutting off the relationship. The table, the children, and the dogs are all within the picture of one household.

The woman did not become angry at the words of Jesus, nor did she protest that her people and her dignity had been slighted. She first answered, *"Yes, Lord, yet."* She did not claim to hold the same rights as the children of Israel, nor did she deny the order of salvation Jesus had set. Neither did she despair and withdraw. While acknowledging that the Lord's judgment was right, she believed that His compassion was abundant enough to reach even her and her daughter.

In the answer, *"even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs,"* humility and faith are joined together. The woman did not say she would take the children's place. Nor did she claim she deserved to receive a large portion. She only believed that the Lord's power was sufficient to rescue her daughter completely with mere crumbs. For the Lord's grace is not a limited provision that runs out for the Gentiles once it has been bestowed on Israel.

The humility of this woman must not be turned into a merit of salvation. It was not that she paid the price of grace by speaking many self-lowering words or enduring shame for a long time. She held on not to her own qualification but only to

the authority and the compassion of Jesus. True repentance, likewise, is not an act of degrading oneself to build up merit; it is acknowledging as right the word by which God judges us sinners, and abandoning one's own righteousness. A sinner seeks salvation not because he has any right to demand it of God, but because God is merciful.

Jesus declared, *"For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter."* The woman did not take Jesus home with her, nor did she first confirm her daughter's healing with her eyes. But she believed the words of Jesus and went home. When she arrived, the child was lying on the bed and the demon had already gone out. Distance placed no limit on the authority of Jesus, and the unclean spirit had to obey His command.

This event does not teach that a whole family automatically receives the remission of sins through one mother's faith. In the passage the daughter was delivered from the demon's oppression through her mother's plea, but everlasting remission of sins is received when each person believes the word of the gospel with his own heart. Believers can pray earnestly for their families and neighbors and preach the gospel to them, but they cannot believe in another's place. The One who accomplishes salvation is Jesus, and each soul must accept the gospel He has accomplished.

In the previous section Jesus said that what defiles a man is not the food that enters from outside but the sin that comes out of the heart. Then a Gentile woman, whom the Jews regarded as unclean, came to Jesus and received grace. This shows that lineage, food regulations, and outward religious forms are not the standard that makes a person clean. Even a Jew, if he refuses the gospel, is not saved; and even a Gentile, if she acknowledges her sin and believes in Jesus Christ, receives the

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grace of God.

Since evil thoughts, greed, pride, and other sins come out of every person's heart, no one can claim before God the standing of a child by himself. To save such sinners, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took on His own body the sins not only of the Jews but of all the people of the world, and carrying those sins He died on the Cross shedding His blood, receiving the judgment in their place. And He was buried and rose again on the third day, completing salvation.

Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel for the nation of Israel or for especially good people only. Whoever believes the fact that Jesus completely removed the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of all sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit, regardless of nation, position, or past. Even a sinner who was once far from God becomes a child of God in Christ. This is not the result of man's producing the qualification of a child, but the grace God has bestowed freely.

The person who has become a child of God by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit should learn the posture of the life of faith from this woman's attitude. He must not make the fact of having received the remission of sins a ground of superiority, but remember that everything is the Lord's grace. When the word touches his thoughts and his pride, rather than rejecting it at once, he should consider whether God's judgment is right and lay down his wrong thinking. At the same time, he should not shrink back in discouragement before hardship, but believe the Lord's goodness and power and pray.

This section teaches that the faith that receives grace from God does not lie in asserting one's own qualification. The

Syro-Phoenician woman acknowledged the Lord's words with *"Yes, Lord, yet,"* and believed the Lord's power, for which mere crumbs were sufficient. Jesus did not turn her faith away but immediately rescued her daughter, who was far away. The sinner must lay down his own righteousness and religious merits and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed. Whoever believes that gospel is washed of all sins and accepted as a child of God.

Jesus had compassion on the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and commanded, *"Ephphatha,"* and made his ears and tongue whole

"Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.' Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, 'He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak'" (Mark 7:31–37).

After coming out of the region of Tyre, Jesus passed through Sidon and the region of Decapolis and came to the Sea of Galilee. Following His healing of the Syro-Phoenician

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woman's daughter in the previous section, He passed through an area where many Gentiles lived and met another person. This movement shows that the compassion and the power of Jesus were not confined to the Jewish region. The promise of salvation was given first to Israel, but the grace God gives through Christ had to be delivered to all nations.

People brought to Jesus a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. He could hardly hear directly what was said about Jesus, and it would have been hard for him to express his need clearly in words. The people around him did not ignore his situation; instead, they brought him to Jesus and begged Him to lay His hand on him. This shows how important it is, when one person can hardly come to the Lord alone, for others to help him at his side and plead together with him.

Those who brought him asked Jesus to lay His hand on him. But Jesus was not bound to the way they expected; He worked in the way fitting for that man. When we pray in faith, it is right to tell God our needs, but we must not prescribe to God the method of His answer. The Lord knows each person's situation most exactly and works according to His own will and wisdom.

Jesus took the man aside from the multitude. This was not the establishing of a rule that every healing must take place away from people. Jesus did not make him a spectacle but treated him as a person. He met him privately so that this man, for whom verbal communication was difficult, could concentrate on the Lord's actions and understand what He was doing for him. The Lord's ministry was not a performance displaying power before crowds but attentive love toward one person.

Jesus put His fingers in the man's two ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Touching his ears and tongue directly was

like a sign telling the man with his own eyes that the Lord was now healing his unhearing ears and his unspeaking tongue. The power was not in the fingers or the spittle as substances. Jesus healed other sick people with His word alone. Therefore we must not turn this action into a healing formula or suppose that spittle and touch hold mysterious power.

Jesus looked up to heaven and sighed. This sigh does not mean that His power was insufficient and He was struggling. It is the sight of His deep pity for the reality in which, in a world where sin has entered, people suffer disease, disability, and isolation. Jesus did not observe the suffering man from a distance but took his pain into His own heart. At the same time, by looking up to heaven He showed that His ministry was being carried out in oneness with the Father's will.

Jesus said, *"Ephphatha."* Mark records the very word used at the time and explains that it means *"Be opened."* When the Lord's command fell, the man's ears were opened and the impediment of his tongue was loosed at once. He did not improve little by little; he immediately heard and spoke plainly. This was a work that only the Creator, who made the ear and the tongue, could do. Jesus is not merely a physician who studies diseases but the Son of God, who restores the organs of life to wholeness.

This healing is also a sign showing the age of the Messiah foretold by the Old Testament. The promise that when God comes to save, the ears of the deaf will be opened and the tongue of the mute will sing appeared in the ministry of Jesus. The people were astonished and said, *"He has done all things well."* Making the deaf hear and the mute speak testified that Jesus is the promised Christ and the Creator, who restores the creation marred by sin.

But this bodily healing must not be interpreted as though

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every hearing or speech disability arose from personal sin or spiritual stubbornness. Judging a person with a disability to be spiritually deficient is not the meaning of the passage. Neither must we promise that if only one has faith, every disability and disease will always disappear immediately in this world. This event was a complete healing that actually happened to one person at that time, a special sign revealing the identity of Jesus and the restoration of the kingdom of God.

At the same time, this event also gives an important spiritual lesson. Even a person whose bodily ears are normal may fail to grasp the meaning of the gospel if he will not listen to the word of God. If he insists that only his own thoughts and religious traditions are right, he hears the word but does not receive it into his heart. Conversely, the person whose spiritual ears are opened acknowledges that God is right even when the word differs from his own thinking, and receives into his heart the salvation Jesus accomplished.

The sight of the tongue loosed and the speech made plain also makes us think of what the person who has believed the gospel must testify. If one does not know the gospel accurately, one may profess to believe in Jesus and yet be unable to explain clearly how one's sins were removed. We must not speak only of human experience, doctrine, and feeling, but deliver, according to the written word, how Jesus Christ saved sinners. Only when we hear the gospel rightly with spiritual ears can we also speak the truth of salvation plainly with the tongue.

The true "*Ephphatha*" that Jesus accomplished to save sinners appears within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took on His own body the sins of all the people of the world. Carrying those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, receiving

the judgment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again on the third day. When the Holy Spirit opens this word of salvation to a person, he abandons the thought of washing away his sins by his own deeds and comes to hear and believe the righteousness God has accomplished.

Whoever believes with the heart the gospel that Jesus completed salvation with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit gives the saved person's heart the wisdom to understand the word of God and leads him to testify clearly of the remission of sins he has already received. This is a spiritual grace enjoyed by every believer, regardless of bodily hearing or the ability to speak.

Jesus sternly warned the people to tell no one about this, but the more He warned them, the more widely they proclaimed it. They must have longed to make the amazing deed known. Yet even a good intention cannot come before the Lord's command. At that time Jesus did not want people to misunderstand Him as a political savior who performs miracles, nor His saving work to be hindered by the fervor of the crowds. The sign alone must not spread while the meaning of the gospel headed for the Cross was veiled.

Today, since the command has been given to preach the gospel to everyone after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the saints must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit widely. But we must not exaggerate miracles and mysterious experiences to draw people's attention. We must not stop at the admiration, *"He has done all things well,"* but go on to preach clearly why Jesus came into the world and how He removed all sins. Signs point to Jesus Christ, but salvation is received when one believes the gospel He completed.

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This section shows that Jesus is the Creator, who cares attentively for one suffering person and makes whole the unhearing ears and the bound tongue. Believers must not condemn the souls who find it hard to hear the gospel, but help them with love and prayer, like the people who led this man to Jesus. We must also stand humbly before the word so that our own ears are not closed by our own thoughts, and neither blur nor hide the gospel we have already heard. The Holy Spirit opens our ears to understand the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and uses our tongues to preach plainly Jesus Christ, who saved sinners. ✉

Questions and Answers on Mark Chapter 7

[Question] 1. What is the core problem that Mark chapter 7 deals with?

The most central problem Mark chapter 7 deals with is what the sin is that defiles a man, and how the defiled can receive the grace of God. Jesus taught that outward religious acts and the tradition of men cannot wash away the sin of the heart, and that the sin that defiles a man comes out of his heart.

The Pharisees and the scribes saw the disciples of Jesus eating bread with unwashed hands and denounced them as unclean. They carefully kept the tradition of the elders about washing hands and vessels, yet they forsook the very commandment of God. Jesus rebuked them as hypocrites who honored God with their lips while their heart was far from God. Teaching the commandments of men as though they were the word of God, and nullifying the word of God in order to keep their own tradition—this was their fundamental problem.

Jesus said that what enters from outside, like food or unwashed hands, is not what defiles a man. What defiles a man are the sins that come out of the heart, such as evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, pride, and foolishness. Therefore man must acknowledge that he is not a being who happens to be defiled by a few wrong actions, but a fundamentally sinful being whose heart keeps producing sin.

The problem of sin, then, is not solved by the ritual of

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washing hands, by good deeds, or by keeping religious rules. A person must first acknowledge before the word of God the sinful reality of his own heart and lay down his own righteousness and judgment. Then he must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by taking on all the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John, dying on the Cross under the judgment of those sins, and rising from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins, is born again, and becomes a righteous person before God.

The event of the Syro-Phoenician woman shows what the faith is like that humbles itself before the word of God and seeks the Lord's compassion. That woman neither pushed back against the words of Jesus nor asserted her own qualification; she answered, *"Yes, Lord, yet,"* and asked even for crumbs. Jesus received those words as faith and cast the demon out of her daughter. The grace of God comes not to the person who asserts his own righteousness, but to the person who acknowledges God's judgment as right and seeks His mercy.

Finally, the healing of the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech reveals that Jesus is the One who holds the authority to restore the body's ears and tongue to wholeness. Applied to the gospel, Jesus is the One who opens spiritually closed ears so that we understand the word, and who has us testify of the grace of salvation. In the end, Mark chapter 7 teaches that we must not rely on outward rites of purification and the traditions of men, but must acknowledge, according to the word of God, the reality of the sin that comes out of the heart and believe the grace of salvation that Jesus Christ has accomplished.

[Question] 2. What kind of group were the Pharisees, who appear in verse 1?

The Pharisees were a religious group in Jewish society in the days of Jesus who tried to keep the Law strictly. They valued not only the Law of Moses but also the tradition of the elders, handed down in order to apply the Law to daily life. They tried especially to keep the regulations concerning food, the Sabbath, tithing, and purification thoroughly, and they held considerable influence over the people. Historically, too, they are known as a group that treasured the transmitted interpretations and customs together with the written Law.

The Pharisees in Mark chapter 7 gathered to Jesus together with the scribes who had come from Jerusalem. They saw the disciples of Jesus eating bread without washing their hands according to the tradition of the elders and denounced them as unclean. They valued a person's outward purity and religious form very highly.

But Jesus rebuked them, saying that they were forsaking the commandment of God in order to keep the tradition of men. Outwardly they looked as though they served God zealously, but in reality they were putting the commandments of men before the word of God. They also judged other people's outward conduct while failing to realize the sin within their own hearts.

In Mark chapter 7, therefore, the Pharisees do not simply stand for people who kept the Law zealously. They show the figure of religious people who put the tradition of men and their own righteousness before the word of God, and tried to cover the sin of their hearts with outward devoutness. This is not a generalization that all Pharisees were always the same; it explains the fault of the Pharisees who denounced Jesus in this passage.

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[Question] 3. What kind of people were the scribes, who appear in verse 1?

The scribes originally referred to those who recorded and copied the Scriptures, but by the days of Jesus the term meant experts in the Law, who studied and interpreted the Law of Moses and taught it to the people. They answered questions about the Law and interpreted religious and practical regulations, and some were also involved in judicial matters and the drafting of public documents.

The scribes and the Pharisees were not exactly the same group. The Pharisees were a religious company that treasured the tradition of the elders and tried to keep the Law strictly, while the scribes were those charged with the office of studying and interpreting the Law professionally. But since many scribes followed the tradition and interpretation of the Pharisees, the two groups often appear together in the Gospels.

The scribes in Mark 7:1 came from Jerusalem and gathered to Jesus together with the Pharisees. They saw the disciples of Jesus eating bread without washing their hands according to the tradition of the elders and made an issue of it. The very people who should have taught the word of God rightly to the people judged Jesus and His disciples by outward purity regulations and the tradition of men.

Jesus rebuked them for teaching the commandments of men as doctrines and forsaking the commandment of God in order to keep their own tradition. This shows that even a person with much biblical knowledge, standing in the position of teaching the word, can rather block the will of God if he exalts his own thoughts and traditions above the word of God. Since this passage deals with the fault of the scribes who denounced Jesus, however, it must not be generalized to mean that all scribes

always showed the same attitude.

[Question] 4. Mark 7:1—what were the relations between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes?

Verse 1 by itself records only that the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered to Jesus. But the verses that follow show that they had come not to learn or believe the words of Jesus, but were watching with the intent of finding fault with the conduct of Jesus and His disciples and denouncing them.

They made an issue of the disciples eating bread without washing their hands according to the tradition of the elders. At this, Jesus rebuked them, saying that they laid aside the commandment of God and held the tradition of men, and that they honored God with their lips while their heart was far from God.

There was, then, tension and opposition between Jesus and these men over the word of God. Jesus valued the commandment of God and the human heart, but they judged Jesus by the tradition of the elders and outward purity. The root cause of the conflict lay not in Jesus going against the word of God, but in their exalting their own tradition and judgment above the word of God.

[Question] 5. Mark 7:2—what conduct of Jesus' disciples became the issue?

The conduct the Pharisees and the scribes made an issue of was that some of the disciples of Jesus ate bread with *"defiled,*

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that is, with unwashed hands."

Here, not washing the hands means not that they failed to wash off dirt for hygiene, but that they did not wash their hands according to the religious rite of purification set by the tradition of the elders. The issue raised was not that the disciples had broken the commandment of God, but that they had not followed the tradition of the elders, which the Pharisees held so important.

[Question] 6. What does *"the tradition of the elders"* in verse 3 refer to?

"The tradition of the elders" refers to the detailed rules and customs that the old elders and teachers of the Law of Israel interpreted and made in order to keep the Law of Moses in daily life, handed down over a long time. The *"tradition"* here is not a word meaning biological heredity; it means what was passed down from earlier generations to the next.

In Mark chapter 7, the examples given are washing the hands in a special way before eating, sprinkling oneself with water after returning from the marketplace, and washing cups, pitchers, and copper vessels. These regulations carried the religious meaning of purifying oneself from the unclean things one had touched outside.

But not all these detailed regulations were what God had directly commanded in the Scriptures. They were traditions of men that had arisen to explain God's commandments and help keep them, yet the Pharisees and the scribes regarded them with the same authority as the word of God and judged those who did not keep them to be unclean.

The heart of what Jesus rebuked was not the fact that

tradition existed, but that they exalted the tradition of men above the commandment of God and forsook even the word of God in order to keep it. Tradition should help under the word of God; it must never become a standard that replaces or nullifies the word of God.

[Question] 7. What are the washing rules listed in Mark 7:3–4?

The Pharisees and all the Jews, following the tradition of the elders, did not eat unless they washed their hands in a special way. Also, after returning from the marketplace, they did not eat unless they performed the rite of purifying themselves by sprinkling water.

Besides these, they kept various rules of washing the cups, pitchers, and copper vessels used for holding food and drink. This was not simply a hygienic rule for removing dust and germs, but a religious rite of purification by which they considered themselves cleansed from the unclean things they had touched outside.

[Question] 8. In Mark 7:5, what did the Pharisees and the scribes demand to know from Jesus?

The Pharisees and the scribes asked Jesus, "*Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?*"

They did not say that the disciples had broken the commandment of God; they blamed them for not keeping the hand-washing ritual set by the tradition of the elders. This

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shows that they regarded the tradition of men with the same authority as the word of God, and judged those who did not follow that tradition to be unclean.

[Question] 9. Mark 7:6–7—what did Jesus answer to the accusation of the scribes and Pharisees?

Jesus rebuked them as *"hypocrites"* and said that Isaiah had prophesied well about them. And He quoted the words, *"This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."*

The scribes and the Pharisees outwardly kept the purity regulations thoroughly and looked as though they honored God, but their actual heart had departed far from God. They put the commandments and traditions men had made before the word of God, and with these they judged and taught others.

Jesus made clear that however devout outward religious acts may look, if one does not believe and obey the word of God with the heart, that worship is vain.

[Question] 10. Mark 7:8–9—what does it mean to lay aside the commandment of God and hold the tradition of men?

To lay aside the commandment of God and hold the tradition of men means that while professing with the mouth to serve God, in actual life one counts the traditions and interpretations men have made as more important than what God has said. The Pharisees and the scribes were not people

ignorant of the Scriptures. On the contrary, they studied and taught the Law, yet they made the tradition of the elders, handed down over a long time, a higher standard of judgment than the word itself.

They judged the disciples of Jesus, who had not washed their hands according to the tradition of the elders, to be unclean. But the hand-washing rite of purification was a detailed rule men had made, and the disciples had not broken the commandment of God by failing to keep it. The Pharisees and the scribes judged people by whether their own tradition had been kept, rather than examining what God had said.

The case of Corban that follows shows that fault concretely. God commanded that parents be honored, but they taught that if one declared what should be given to one's parents to be Corban, that is, given to God, one did not have to serve one's parents. They put forward the religious pretext of being for God, but in reality they nullified God's command with the tradition of men and protected their own gain. This is why Jesus rebuked them, saying, *"All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition."*

To forsake the commandment of God, therefore, does not mean only failing to read the Bible or to lead a religious life. Even while reading the Bible and attending worship, when one's own thoughts, doctrines, and traditions differ from the word of God, choosing the teaching of men and laying down the word of God is also forsaking His commandment. The result is that even with the outward forms of religion in place, the heart drifts far from God, and one comes to worship God in vain.

To acknowledge the word of God is not to claim that one can keep all that word well. Rather, it is to acknowledge that God's commandment is right but that one cannot live fully by that word, being a creature out of whose heart sin keeps

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coming. The person who accepts God's judgment does not rely on his own righteousness and deeds, but comes to seek the Lord's mercy and salvation.

Such a person believes just as it stands the word that Jesus took on all the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross receiving the judgment of those sins, and rose from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins, is born again, and becomes a righteous person before God. The faith that does not forsake the word of God is not insisting on one's own tradition or thinking, but accepting as right both God's judgment upon oneself and the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Today as well, the traditions of the church, the teachings of theologians, and the doctrines and customs of denominations must be discerned under the word of God. Tradition itself is not all wrong, but if it conflicts with the word of God or blocks the word, it must be laid down. That the tradition of men must not be allowed to take the place of the word of God is the heart of verses 8 and 9.

[Question] 11. Mark 7:10–13—what did Jesus teach concerning *"Corban"*?

"Corban" means something offered to God, or set apart to be offered to Him. In those days people considered that if one declared the property with which one should benefit one's parents to be *"Corban,"* that is, given to God, one no longer had to use that property to support one's parents.

But God had commanded through Moses, *"Honor your father and your mother,"* and had said that he who curses

father or mother must be put to death. Honoring one's parents and supplying what they need was something God Himself had commanded. Yet the Pharisees and the scribes, putting forward the human tradition of Corban, taught that one need give nothing to one's parents.

Jesus rebuked them for using the religious pretext of giving to God to evade the responsibility of serving their parents. Outwardly it looked like the devout act of offering wealth to God, but in reality it was hypocrisy that broke God's command and protected their own property. With the claim of serving God, they nullified the love and responsibility God had commanded.

What Jesus rebuked, therefore, was not the offering of gifts to God itself, but the nullifying of the plain word of God by means of the tradition of Corban. No religious regulation or vow made by man can stand above the commandment of God, and no one may evade the responsibilities he ought to bear under the pretext of serving God.

Jesus said that they did not stop at the case of Corban: *"And many such things you do."* This shows that the practice of putting tradition and their own gain before the word of God was being repeated in many areas of life. True godliness is not evading responsibility with religious words and forms, but acknowledging the word of God as right and obeying His will.

[Question] 12. What were the words Jesus spoke to the multitude in Mark 7:14–16?

Jesus called the multitude again and said, *"Hear Me, everyone, and understand."* And He said that nothing that enters a man from outside can defile him, but that what comes

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out of a man defiles him.

This means that food eaten with unwashed hands, or any material thing entering from outside, does not make a man's soul sinful. The sin that defiles a man does not rub off on him from outside; it comes out of the sinful thoughts and desires already in his heart.

Jesus therefore taught the people not to fix their attention on outward rites of purification only, but to hear the word of God and realize the reality of the sin that comes out of their own hearts.

[Question] 13. Mark 7:17–18—what did Jesus answer the disciples who asked the meaning of the parable?

When Jesus left the multitude and entered a house, His disciples asked Him the meaning of the parable. Jesus rebuked them, saying, *"Are you thus without understanding also?"* and asked whether they did not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him.

The disciples, too, were accustomed to the purity customs of the time, and so they had not completely escaped the thought that food or unwashed hands make a person unclean. Jesus made them realize that what truly defiles a man is not the food that enters from outside but the sin that comes out of the heart.

[Question] 14. What do the words Jesus spoke in Mark 7:19 mean?

Jesus said that food cannot defile a man's soul because it

does not enter his heart but enters his stomach and passes out of the body. And with these words He declared all foods clean.

The heart here does not mean the bodily organ that food enters; it refers to the inner man, where thought, faith, and will are seated. Food only passes through the body's digestion; it cannot put sin into a man's heart. Therefore the heart does not become unclean before God merely because one ate a certain food or did not wash one's hands according to the tradition of the elders.

That He declared all foods clean means that food itself contains no defilement that makes a man's soul sinful. This word does not mean that hygiene and health may be ignored; it means that food and outward rites of purification cannot be the standard of sin or the means of making the soul clean.

Man's fundamental problem lies not in what he eats but in what sin comes out of his heart. Therefore, before making outward food and the body clean, it is more important to realize before the word of God the sinful reality of one's own heart.

[Question] 15. Mark 7:20–23—what are the evil things Jesus listed that come out of a man?

As what comes out of a man—out of his heart—Jesus spoke first of *"evil thoughts,"* and as their concrete forms He listed fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. And He said that all these evil things come from within and defile a man.

Evil thoughts are the source of every wrong thought that goes against the will of God. Fornication, adultery, and lewdness express sexual desire and impurity, and theft means

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the heart and the act of taking what belongs to another as one's own. Murder is connected not only with the act of harming a person's life but also with the evil heart that hates another and wishes him removed. Covetousness is the endless greed that is not satisfied with what has been given and reaches for what belongs to others.

Wickedness is the malice that harms others without compunction, and deceit is deceiving another with falsehood for one's own gain. An evil eye means looking at another with envy or with an evil heart, and blasphemy refers to words and attitudes that insult and slander God or man. Pride is the heart that exalts itself and looks down on others, and foolishness is the state of acting senselessly, stupidly, and wildly, without the fear of God.

Jesus did not say that these evils enter a man's heart from his surroundings or from food. He said that the sin already in the heart comes out in thought, word, and deed and defiles oneself and others. The environment does not create sin that was not in the heart; it only gives the sin that was in the heart an occasion to be revealed. Therefore a person must not blame his evil conduct on his surroundings or on other people, but must acknowledge that the conduct came from the sin of his own heart.

This word does not mean that a person can become clean by correcting a few evil behaviors. Even if one washes hands and vessels and keeps religious rules, the root of sin in the heart does not disappear. Good deeds and self-cultivation may suppress sin, but no one can completely wash the sin out of his own heart. One must first acknowledge before the word of God that all these evils are in one's own heart, and lay down one's own righteousness and excuses.

Jesus took on all the sins of all mankind with the baptism

He received from John, died on the Cross receiving the judgment of those sins, and rose from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all sins, is born again, becomes a righteous person before God, and receives the Holy Spirit and lives in new life. Verses 20–23, therefore, are not merely a word condemning man's evil conduct; they are a word that leads us to realize the fundamental sin of our hearts and to believe the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus Christ has completed.

[Question] 16. According to Mark 7:24, what region did Jesus go to?

Jesus left that place and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. He entered a house there and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden, because the report about Him had already spread widely.

[Question] 17. Mark 7:25–26—for what purpose did the Greek woman, a Syro-Phoenician, come to Jesus?

That woman came to Jesus to save her young daughter, who had an unclean spirit. Having heard the report of Jesus, she came at once, fell at His feet, and kept begging Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

She was a Gentile woman, a Greek and a Syro-Phoenician by birth, but she came to Jesus with her daughter's suffering, which she could not solve by her own strength, and asked for help.

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[Question] 18. According to Mark 7:27, how did Jesus answer the woman's plea?

Jesus answered the woman, *"Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."*

Here the children refer to the people of Israel, who first received God's covenant, and the bread refers to the grace of God and the blessing of salvation given to them first. The dogs represent the Gentiles, who from the Jewish viewpoint of the time stood outside the covenant. Jesus spoke of the order in which God's saving work was given first to Israel, and brought to light what attitude the woman would show before that word.

[Question] 19. Mark 7:28—what does the answer, *"even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs,"* show?

The woman's answer shows first the humility of acknowledging the words of Jesus as right and placing herself in the lowest place. When Jesus said that it was not good to throw the children's bread to the dogs, the woman did not grow angry as though insulted, nor did she assert her own qualification. She answered, *"Yes, Lord,"* accepting just as it was the rightness of the Lord's judgment.

Yet without demanding to be treated like the children, the woman did not give up the Lord's compassion. Saying that even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs the children drop, she pleaded that even without any qualification she might receive some small share of the Lord's grace. She believed that she had no merit to put forward, but that the grace and the

power of Jesus were abundant.

The crumbs the woman spoke of do not mean that the power of Jesus is small or incomplete. She believed that even the smallest portion of the grace Jesus bestows was sufficient to save her daughter from the demon. It was faith that looked more at the great authority and compassion of Jesus than at her own circumstances.

In this answer there also appear an earnest love that would not give up her daughter and a persevering faith. The woman fell at Jesus' feet from the beginning, and even after hearing a word hard to accept, she did not withdraw. Rather than putting her feelings and her pride first, she counted her daughter's deliverance more important and sought the Lord's grace to the end.

Applied to salvation, this word teaches that no one can demand the remission of sins by putting forward his own righteousness, good deeds, or religious qualifications. One must first acknowledge before the word of God that one's heart is full of sin, that one cannot solve that sin oneself, and that without God's mercy one can only be judged. And one must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took on all the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross receiving the judgment of those sins, and rose from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins and becomes a righteous person before God.

The woman's humility was not a merit that purchased grace. Her answer revealed a heart that did not rely on her own qualification but believed and accepted only the compassion of Jesus. The confession *"Yes, Lord, yet"* shows true faith, which acknowledged God's judgment as right and at the same time trusted to the end the Lord, who bestows grace even on the unqualified.

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[Question] 20. Mark 7:29–30—what result did the woman's humility and unyielding plea of faith finally bring?

Jesus said to the woman, "*For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.*" When the woman believed that word and returned home, the child was lying on the bed, and the unclean spirit had already gone out.

Jesus cast out the demon by His word alone, without going to the woman's house or laying His hand on the daughter. This shows the authority of Jesus, which is not limited by distance or place, and the faith of the woman, who believed that word just as it was and went home.

The woman received her answer not because she had piled up some merit of humility and persistence and thereby earned grace. It was because, while acknowledging that she had no qualification, she believed and relied to the end on the compassion and the power of Jesus. Jesus saw the faith of the woman who accepted the word of God as right and sought the Lord's grace, and He released her daughter from the power of the demon.

[Question] 21. Mark 7:31—what was the route Jesus traveled through Gentile lands?

After coming out of the region of Tyre, Jesus passed through Sidon to the north, then went through the region of Decapolis, where many Gentiles lived, and came to the Sea of Galilee.

That is, His route went from Tyre to Sidon, then by way of Decapolis back to the Sea of Galilee. Geographically this was

quite a roundabout way, and it shows that the ministry of Jesus did not stay within the Jewish region but was extending into Gentile territory as well.

[Question] 22. Mark 7:32–37—what did Jesus do when the man who was deaf and had a speech impediment was brought to Him?

People brought to Jesus a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and begged Him to lay His hand on him. The man could not hear the words of Jesus for himself and could hardly state his own case clearly, but the people around him led him to Jesus and asked for help.

Jesus took the man aside from the multitude. Then He put His fingers in the man's ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. The passage does not directly state why Jesus took him aside, but it can be understood as Jesus not making him a spectacle for the crowd, but facing him personally and caring for him attentively.

Then Jesus looked up to heaven, sighed, and said to him, *"Ephphatha,"* which means, *"Be opened."* The sigh of Jesus shows His heart of pity for the state of the man who suffered with closed ears and a bound tongue.

As soon as the word of Jesus was spoken, the man's ears were opened and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and his speech became plain. Without treatment or training, by a single word of Jesus the man who could not hear came to hear, and the man who could not speak properly came to speak plainly. This shows the authority of Jesus, who makes closed ears and bound tongues whole.

Jesus sternly warned the people to tell no one about this.

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But the more He warned them, the more widely they proclaimed it. The people were astonished beyond measure and said, *"He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."*

Applied spiritually, this event teaches that man must escape the spiritual deafness and dumbness of hearing the word of God without understanding it and of failing to testify of the gospel clearly. The One who opens spiritually closed ears to understand the gospel, and who looses the bound tongue to testify of the grace of salvation, is also Jesus. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

See your fundamentally sinful self and learn the truth

< Mark 7:1-23 >

"Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.' He said to them, 'All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be

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put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban'—' (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.' When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, 'Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!' When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. So He said to them, 'Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?' And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'"

We are by nature a brood of evildoers, unable to do good by ourselves, and when I think of how God has saved such people as us, I am truly thankful and my heart praises the Lord. Looking at the passage we have read today, the Pharisees all loved hypocrisy. They loved making only the outside clean. Every religion cleanses the shell. If people wash their hands and feet clean, wash their hair clean, and dress in clean clothes, they think they are clean. So the Pharisees, too, thought of themselves as

clean people. But is a person clean because his outward appearance is clean? Being clean in outward appearance alone does not make one clean. The Pharisees in this passage professed to believe in God, yet they turned the word of God into the teachings of men and taught the people with them.

The Pharisees drifted into the hypocrisy of cleansing only the outside

The passage begins, *"Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault" (Mark 7:1–2).* In the days of Jesus the Pharisees had these customs. When they came in from outside, they diligently washed their hands and feet; when they returned from the marketplace, they sprinkled themselves with water and washed the cups, pitchers, and copper vessels in the house. Only after washing like this did they prepare food and eat. It sounds like a matter of course. It seems only natural that when a person returns from outside, he washes his hands and feet and cleans off the dirt before eating. But the point is that they made this natural routine into a religion. The person who washed his body after coming back from the market, washed the vessels clean, sprinkled water, and then ate was given high marks as a very clean, well-mannered person, clean before God. Because of this, all the Pharisees drifted into hypocrisy. It was enough to look proper in people's eyes; if one washed hands, feet, and body clean, wore clean clothes, and went about with only the outside adorned, one received high marks within the religion of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees and the scribes slandered Jesus and His

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disciples. Sneering, *"Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" (Mark 7:5)*, they wrote the disciples off as unclean people. Then our Lord spoke: *"All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death'" (Mark 7:9–10)*. Even when there was something they ought to give their parents, they did not give it. If they did not want to give it to their parents, all they had to do was declare that it *"is Corban"—(that is, a gift to God) (Mark 7:11)*. Since it had been offered to God, they said, neither parents nor anyone else could touch it. They were like people who use the word of God to seek the profit of their own flesh. Religious people made such rules about God and thought something terrible would happen if they broke them. So even when their parents wanted and asked for it, they could not give it.

This is like doing business with a Bible and a hymnbook placed on the shop counter. At one time that trend was quite the fashion. If a Bible and a hymnbook were on display, even people who did not believe in God would think, 'This person believes in God. He must be sincere and would not lie,' and so they trusted him readily, and business went well. But in reality it was like deceiving people all the more with that outward show and doing them more harm. With the shell they claimed to believe in God, attend church, read the Bible, and sing praises, but in the end they did not believe the word of God; they believed the contents of the doctrine books taught in the church they attended. Believing not the word of God but only the doctrines their denomination taught, they ought to have learned who God is and what God says to them; instead they knew nothing of God and learned only human doctrine, the doctrine of that denomination.

Though they said they believed in God, in reality they believed and followed the tradition and doctrines spoken by pastors and elders and reputedly great men.

Teaching the commandments of men is worshiping God in vain

In practical terms it is like this. In the Presbyterian Church, what Calvin said is the pillar. What matters to them, and what they learn, is not what is written in the Bible so much as what Calvin said, what that theologian said. The five points of Calvinism, Calvin's doctrines of election and predestination, his doctrine of salvation, of the Holy Spirit, of heaven, even of sanctification—they learn and believe it all following what Calvin unfolded about the Bible. The Bible they ought to learn they do not believe, and what Calvin said has become an authority above the Bible.

The Pharisees of old also professed to believe in God and carried around the scrolls of the Old Testament, written from Genesis to Malachi. But they did not learn the word of Scripture; they learned the teachings of men who had spoken about the word. Those teachings were handed down from mouth to mouth, until in the end the Bible disappeared and human tradition, human doctrine, took the place of the word of God. Therefore Jesus said, *"This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6–7)*. Because they worshiped God with the teachings of men, He said they worshiped Him in vain. So they all practiced hypocrisy. The word of God did not matter; all they had to do was polish the shell.

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Broadly speaking, countless Christians today are the same. If you attend a Methodist church, what John Wesley said is important; if you go to a Presbyterian church, what Calvin said is important. They open the Bible, yes, but what they teach, with the Bible laid open, is what a man said about it—Calvin said this about this passage, John Wesley said that. So people attend church diligently at first. They learn prayers of repentance, they learn the doctrine of sanctification, they learn that if you believe in Jesus you go to heaven, and they learn hymns and prayer and fasting prayer and all-night prayer and etiquette and rules and the order of worship. But the longer they attend church, the more the shell alone grows. Carrying the Bible around, singing hymns with grace, praying in a reverent posture, how to fellowship with church members, how being baptized gives you the right to vote, how to rise in office and how to become an elder—these are the things they learn. The highest rank for a layman is elder, and to become an elder you must give much money; and having given much money, you come to sway the church. They are experts at attending dawn prayer, all-night prayer, fasting prayer, and mountain prayer, and at how to fill out offering envelopes. The outside is clean and the form is perfectly furnished, but the heart has nothing to do with God. This is exactly what Jesus was speaking about.

What defiles a man is the sin that comes out of the heart

Rebuking the Pharisees, Jesus said that what enters a man's mouth from outside cannot defile him. The Pharisees, however, thought that a person became unclean by eating food with unclean hands. Rebuking them, Jesus asked whether He who

made the outside did not make the inside also, said that the inside must be made clean first, and told them what sins are in the heart of the Pharisees and of all people: *"And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'"* What makes a man unclean is the sin that comes out of his heart.

Every religion cleanses the outside. In one religious order, the first thing newcomers are made to do is clean the toilets. They are made to scrub the filthy stains of public latrines. They say that by wiping them one's mind is disciplined, and that such good deeds even heal the diseases in one's body. They think that if you wipe up the phlegm someone else has spat, your own heart becomes clean and you become a holy person. In another religion they say you become clean by reciting incantations. Even in midwinter they bathe at midnight not in warm water but in cold, comb and bind their hair neatly, put on white clothes, enter the place of prayer, and recite their incantations. People commonly think that if the outside is made clean like this, their heart also becomes clean. Just as the heart feels lighter after a bath and washing one's hair, all religious people are like this. One way or another, they cleanse the outside. But Jesus did not speak that way. The outside should be clean too, but it is the inside that must truly be clean. There is much that is filthy in a man's heart, and He said it must be washed clean before God by believing in Jesus Christ. This filth is in the flesh of every human being.

What comes out of a man's heart defiles him. It is not that eating food outside with dirty hands makes the inside of a man's heart dirty; the filth that is inside a man's heart comes out and

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defiles him and those around him. The first thing that comes out of a man's heart is evil thoughts. Are there very evil thoughts in a man's heart, or not? There are. As the saying goes that enemies kiss often: outwardly a person flatters and agrees, while inwardly thinking, 'How shall I snare that man and bring him down? How can I wreck that company?'—the evil thought of wanting to kill and harm the other is in everyone's heart. The old factional strife of kingdoms shows it well. If the faction differed, they became enemies outright, and depending on who became king, one side was branded traitors and put to death wholesale. Factional strife comes exactly from evil thoughts. This is not something some have and others lack; man is born with the twelve sins in his heart from the very start.

Man is by nature a brood of evildoers

So in the book of Isaiah, God called man a brood of evildoers. Born a brood of evildoers, man pours out the twelve sins as he lives on this earth. Man is clever, so he does not pour out all twelve sins at once. Today he cunningly pours out evil thoughts and brings his opponent down, and when he is about to be caught, he says, 'I was wrong,' and tucks it right back in. What about fornication? Is it in your heart, or not? It is. It is in every fleshly heart. There is no one without this lust. Because it is there, it works all by itself without anyone teaching it. When people buy a computer, everyone at least once visits the places where obscene material is. Because man is a brood of evildoers, everyone is like this.

Every plant, animal, and creature expresses itself purely, just as God made it. The royal azalea blooms as a royal azalea until the end of the world. Grass remains grass to the end, and a pine

tree keeps growing as a pine tree. They do not come out in two forms. But what about man? Twelve things come out. Out of his heart comes fornication, then evil thoughts, then a thieving heart—he always carries the twelve sins in his heart. That is why, in God's sight, he is a sinner. Unless all these sins are washed away, sin is always in his heart. So God says we must receive the washing of our sins. What is in the heart is sin, and what is carried into action is also sin. Sin carried into action is called transgression, because it is committed; sin held quietly in the heart is called fundamental sin.

Lust exists even in little children. Even small children already like the child that catches their eye and say they will marry him or her when they grow up. That, too, is because lust is fundamentally in the heart. Man is by origin a lustful brood. A brood that thinks evil thoughts, a brood that steals, a brood that murders, a brood that commits adultery, a brood that covets, a wicked brood, a deceiving brood, a lewd brood, a brood with an evil eye, a blaspheming brood, a proud brood, a foolish brood.

If we do not know the root of man, we cannot teach man rightly. Since man is such a brood, by the word of God he is a sinner. God has said that the wages of sin is death. He has said that where there is sin, there is death, destruction, and hell. Let us hold ourselves up to the word of God. Do we have sin, or not? We do. Then it is death. Death here means spiritual death, going to hell. Then how shall we be saved? We come to think of how the Lord has saved us. Man sins with his heart and sins with his actions, sinning all his life until he dies. The Lord came to this earth to save from sin the souls that would fall into such sin and go to hell. So Jesus is the Savior, and we receive salvation by believing that this Savior has removed our sins.

So Jesus says that the sin of a man's heart must be washed clean. Since it cannot be done by works and cannot be done by

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weeping, He says we must believe in the Lord and receive the remission of sins. This is how Jesus rebuked the Pharisees: these things come out of a man's heart and defile him, and yet you practice hypocrisy; however clean you wash your hands, however you bathe and eat clean food, your heart does not become clean—you must believe in Jesus Christ and receive the remission of sins. Here, then, we must know that all the religions of the world are useless. If there is a believer who believes in Christianity and in Jesus and yet does not know that the twelve sins are in his own heart, does not know the truth that Jesus came to this earth and removed all his sins with the water and the blood—with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—and instead just carries the Bible around, climbs in rank, brings in money, learns forms, and cleanses only the outward appearance, he must listen again closely to what Jesus said. He must examine whether these sins are really in his own heart, whether he has committed such sins, and whether he will commit them; and he must learn the word of God, come to know the truth of what the word says, receive the remission of sins through the truth, and lead a life of faith, saved from sin by that truth.

Sin is removed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross

We must stop the life of faith that learns only the shell, only the form, while professing Christianity. Such people are like the Pharisees. The Pharisees of old almost all went to hell. Those who received into their hearts the words Jesus spoke obtained salvation and everlasting life, but the Pharisees and scribes here came from Jerusalem, the city of religion, and only slandered what the disciples of Jesus were doing. If you think of

Christianity as a religion and believe it that way, you must turn back. If yours is that religious kind of faith that holds to forms and claims to receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance, you must turn back and throw it away. You must leave it decisively. If after three years of believing there is always sin in your heart, and after five years you have become more of a sinner, and after ten years your sin has grown heavier, what will you do? Jesus said, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)*—yet if after ten years of believing there is a sin on your back so heavy it would take an excavator to lift, how much heavier will it be after twenty years?

God said in the book of Isaiah in the Old Testament, *"Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18)*. Yet if you ask a person who has believed for fifty years whether his sins have become white as snow, he says, 'Disappear? How could they disappear? After fifty years of believing I have more sin. That is why I must pray prayers of repentance daily and pray to reach sanctification.' Then the person who has believed fifty years and the person who has believed ten years alike have sin. Only the weight differs; having sin is the same. That is because he does not believe or accept God's word that man is a brood of evildoers, and does not learn and receive into his heart this salvation of the truth, that Jesus removed his sins with the water and the blood—he has not yet received the remission of sins.

That is why, rather than believe Christianity like a worldly religion, you should sooner throw it away. And you must truly learn the word of the Bible and learn what He says within the word. As you learn, you come to know the truth, and through the truth you gain freedom, and you also come to know your own

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self. Man commits these twelve sins until he dies. Because he keeps committing such sins, prayers of repentance will not do, weeping will not do, offering money will not do, and even martyrdom will not do. We must believe the gospel of the water and the blood by which our Lord saved us—the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the high Himalayan regions there are people who believe that sins are removed by ascetic discipline and that they will then be born into a better station in the next world. There are also people who practice austerities, prostrating their whole body on the ground toward a distant holy site, rising, and prostrating again, over and over. All worldly religions are like that. They suppose the remission of sins comes by their own austerities, their sacrifices, their learning many doctrines. But the remission of sins does not come that way.

We must not believe Christianity like a religion of the world. The religions of the world are like narcotics. While you take the drug it feels good, but when it wears off, your hands and feet tremble and you must take it again. If you keep taking it, in the end you cannot endure even a moment without it and must take it again, and if you do not, you go mad. Such worldly religion must be thrown away. We must know this truth of how the Lord really saved us. And we must know the root of man through the word. How man was born, what he was born carrying, how he lives and where he goes, and how he must believe in the Lord to receive the remission of sins—we must learn this truth. Learn it step by step, and you escape from sin in no time.

We sin until the day we die. Are those sins removed by prayers of repentance? In Christianity the prayer of repentance has become a tool for reaching sanctification. They say Jesus removed original sin, and personal sins are removed by daily prayers of repentance. Does that work? Can the sins you commit until you die be washed by prayers of repentance until you die?

Even for the sins of a single day, if you try to repent of them all before going to bed, you have forgotten far too many; you remember only the one or two that stung your heart—and are even those erased by a prayer of repentance? They are not. Sin is not removed that way. Sin is removed, without fail, through the salvation Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John and so taking our sins upon Himself, being judged on the Cross shedding His blood, and rising again. If, through the transgression of Adam and Eve, we their descendants were born with sin, we can only sin and be destroyed. But where in the Bible does it say that Jesus removed only original sin? Jesus said He took away all the sins of the world and finished it all. Jesus came to this earth once and for all; once and for all He received baptism from John and took over and bore all the sins of the world; carrying those sins, once and for all He shed His blood and died on the Cross and finished it; and once and for all He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Now He sits at the right hand of God's throne and rests. Jesus does not hang on the Cross daily, over and over, to remove sin. He finished it all long ago, once and for all.

You must know the truth. You must not believe it as a religion. Religion is like opium, so you must throw it away decisively. Believing Christianity in the religious way, you have only lost money and gained sin—what have you gained? My heart praises the Lord, who came to this earth to save us—people who really sin until they die, a brood born with sin—and saved us by taking over our sins with the baptism He received from John, being judged with the blood of the Cross, and rising again. Thank you.

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Praise the Lord, who saved us from the twelve seasons of sin

Truly I thank God, who saved us. I feel it too as I do the work of revising manuscripts. It is easy for a human being to say things with his mouth, but seen as we actually are, we are exactly this kind of brood. To speak frankly, when I am doing God's work and fall into the work itself without looking at the word, I get caught up in the thoughts of the flesh. And when I am caught in fleshly thinking, all twelve of these sins come up. When an evil thought flashes through my mind, I push it back: 'What a filthy thought. This is bad; this is sin.' Then the next batter, lust, comes up. You would not believe how explicit the magazines in barbershops and beauty salons are. I once went to have my hair done and read a magazine while waiting a long time, and I had no idea magazines these days carried such strong content. The whole time I read it I was not bored for a moment—and that is what ordinary people all read. So when lust rises up and hesitates whether to strike, I say, 'You are not fit before God. Go.' Then as the third batter the thieving heart comes up—'There was something nice over there; shall I go take it or not?'—and I say, 'You too are not fit before God. Go.' Then as the fourth batter murder comes up—the heart that says, 'When I think of that person I am so angry I cannot bear it'—and then the fifth, adultery; the sixth, covetousness; the seventh, wickedness; the eighth, deceit; the ninth, lewdness; the tenth, the evil eye; the eleventh, blasphemy; and then pride and foolishness, tumbling up one after another without end. Do these things come up, or not? Just as a lifetime has spring, summer, autumn, and winter, man has the twelve seasons of sin.

The twelve seasons revolve day after day. That is why man is a being who sins until he dies. How shall we be saved from all

these sins? Who will save us? It is Jesus Christ, who pitied us, came to this earth, and saved us. Coming out of religion is a matter of course, and beyond that we must be saved from sin. I praise the Lord, who saved us—a brood of evildoers—with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The very thoughts of man are sin

< Mark 7:14-23 >

"When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, 'Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!' When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. So He said to them, 'Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?' And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'"

Today, through the passage we have read from Mark chapter 7, verse 14, I would like us to think about ourselves. Looking at the passage, He said that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him. And from verse 20 He said, *"And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within,*

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out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'" It is telling us that these are the very things that defile a man.

People do not know themselves well

People do not know themselves well. Not only do they not know who they themselves are, but though they say they know even their own memories accurately, much of what they remember is not so. Yet our Lord says of man that what comes out of a man's heart is evil thoughts. Evil thoughts come out of the heart, He says. But we pass over these evil thoughts, saying a thought is just a thought. We remain in a state of not knowing well that man's thoughts are so evil and filthy that they defile our own selves, that by thinking wrongly people bring ruin on themselves, and that by following their thoughts they perish. Sins not carried into action we hardly even consider sins. Even when lustful thoughts, thieving thoughts, murderous thoughts, and adulterous thoughts arise in the heart, we do not treat those thoughts as anything serious. But Jesus, saying that what comes out of a man's heart is evil thoughts, is telling us that thought itself is sin. What are the twelve things listed after He said *"evil thoughts"*? They are all evil thoughts, He says. Thought itself is sin.

Is there anyone who, because he has had a lustful thought, judges himself as now committing sin and says he has gone wrong? When we have not carried it into action but only had the thought, is there anyone who says, 'I am thinking a bad thought right now. I am committing sin right now'? People are generally

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not like this. So it is with you, and so it is with me. That is why people do not know their own sins well. People tend to think that something must be carried into action for it to be sin, but the Lord does not speak that way; He says the thought itself is sin. The evil thoughts that come out of a man's heart—the lustful thought itself—is sin before God. Even with only the thought of wanting to steal, the Lord looks at us and says, 'You, too, are exactly such a person. You are doing exactly that right now.' If so, must we not also agree with the word the Lord speaks to us, that the wages of sin is death?

The Lord says that thought itself is sin

Because man keeps thinking that only what is carried into action is sin, he thinks he has done little wrong. Man lives on because he forgets like that. But the Lord says that the evil thoughts that come out of a man's heart—lustful thoughts, thieving thoughts, murderous thoughts, adulterous thoughts—are all sin. They are great sins, He says. Those thoughts themselves are defiling our own selves. When the Lord sees us, we are filthy. We are sinners. We are lumps of sin. That is why He calls us sinners, and when we have committed sin, it is called transgression because it has been committed. The evil and filthy thoughts that are in the heart do not simply vanish there; they are carried into action, and that is what is called fruit. Yet even believers in Christianity, while thinking lustful thoughts and evil thoughts and adulterous thoughts and thieving thoughts and murderous thoughts, do not admit that they themselves have gone wrong. The problem comes from here.

In fact, because our thoughts themselves are filthy and evil, the Lord sees them and says, 'You are a lump of sin. You are

one bound for hell. You are one who commits these sins and carries them into action.' And He says that the wages of sin is death; that though you are one bound for hell, He came to save you; that He has saved you with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord speaks this way, yet the problem is that we say a thought is just a thought and do not admit that the wrongness of that thought is sin.

When you and I ourselves think evil thoughts, or these thoughts the Lord lists here, do we rebuke ourselves as having gone wrong? Do we admit we are lumps of sin? Do we admit we are committing sin right now? We do not. Because the thought has already passed by, we do not. And so the word the Lord speaks—that He came to save us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—comes to have nothing to do with us. That is the problem. Even if we did not carry it into action but did it only in thought, in the Lord's sight that thought itself is already committing the sin, and He regards us as having done that deed. Therefore we ought to confess before the Lord, 'I am this kind of person. Even when I had a bad thought, I am this kind of person'—but if we have not carried it into action, we do not confess. We do not admit it. And so we come to overestimate ourselves. We come to see ourselves like this: 'You are a great person. You are a decent person. I am a good person.' But because we live thinking such wrong thoughts countless times a day, when the Lord looks at us, He sees us thus: 'You are precisely one bound for hell.' The point of view is different. So the person who does not know himself comes to think of himself as a decent person, while the person who knows and admits himself comes to admit, 'I am a truly hopeless person.' And thereby, of the salvation with which the Lord has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he comes to say, 'I am a person who absolutely needs it.'

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When we admit our sins, the Lord's righteousness becomes absolutely necessary

When a patient looks at a doctor, that doctor is an absolutely necessary being to the patient. But if one has not fallen ill, a doctor is merely someone with a profession. When I have fallen ill, however, that doctor is like a savior. Because he is the one who will heal me, I feel the need of him. It is the same when we believe in the Lord. When we look back at ourselves, we are thinking so many evil and filthy thoughts, and God sees us and says we are bound for hell; so by admitting it, we come to feel that the Lord is absolutely necessary to us and that the Lord's righteousness is absolutely necessary to us. Even within the twenty-four hours of a day we commit these twelve sins. Our thoughts themselves are evil, our thoughts themselves are filthy, our thoughts themselves are lustful and lewd; we think of stealing and murdering and seizing; we think insane thoughts and proud thoughts; we are those who think thoughts of such envy at another's success that we cannot bear it. So we must know to be thankful for the word of the Lord, who said He did not come to call the righteous, but sinners. The problem lies in regarding it as wrong when carried into action and never wrong when only thought. Therefore, knowing that even when only the thought itself has gone wrong, that in itself is, before the Lord, a sin deserving hell, and knowing, every time such a thought rises up, that we ourselves are such people, we must become those who look to the Lord, hold fast to the Lord's righteousness, and give thanks by faith.

People today use the Internet a great deal. They watch videos even on their phones; it is a world where everything goes according to one's thoughts. If a lustful thought arises and one wants to see an obscene screen, one need only press a button to

see it. Without seeing each other's faces, people chat in virtual reality and say every kind of thing to one another. 'I only thought it, and I only did it in virtual reality—what is so wrong with that?' they say. That is how modern people are thinking these days. But our God is saying to you and me today, 'Your thought is an evil thought right now. You are wrong right now. You are one bound for hell. You are committing sin right now.' So we see that when David violated the wife of his subordinate and the prophet Nathan came and rebuked him, David confessed, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)*. He confessed that because he was fundamentally born carrying evil thoughts, he was one who could only do such a deed. The action came out of the thought. So when we are not doing God's work, our thoughts go straight back to the world. At such times, what difference is there between us and the people of the world? In thought, we are gone there in an instant.

Sins committed in thought are also reality before the Lord

In thought, we can visit even a distant city and be back in no time. Let us get in a car in our thoughts and go up onto the highway. In less than an hour we arrive. We turn around and come back. Before we know it, we have stepped in at the chapel door. We have just been to a distant city and back in thought. If that is so, then committing adultery and doing lewd acts are also things we all do in thought. And what we do in thought like this, the Lord says is evil. Why is that? Because after doing it in thought, we later carry it into action. The Lord knows us well. Do we think and then carry it into action, or not? We do. So the

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Lord speaks as He sees that our thoughts are wrong. What comes out of your hearts defiles people and defiles you yourself. You are a sinner. Therefore you must receive the remission of sins. Therefore you need Me. You need Me to remove all your sins. This is what He is saying. Yet we do not think we have done much wrong in thinking an evil thought. That is what is wrong. Must a person kill someone and go to prison to be a murderer? How many people have we killed in our thoughts? Not always, but at times do we not kill people in our thoughts? We do not even hesitate to say rough words like, 'I ought to get rid of that fellow.' We did it in thought, but when the Lord sees it, it is reality. If only the circumstances were formed, we are human beings who could really do such deeds. That is what we are.

This is something that happened during the Vietnam War. It is said that when the soldiers dispatched there saw their comrades dying beside them on the battlefield, their eyes turned wild, and when they captured enemy soldiers, they took revenge and killed them so cruelly that it cannot be put into words. So dreadful were they that the enemy fled at the mere mention of that unit's name. Why is that? They had carried in their hearts the thought, 'That wretch deserves to be skinned alive,' and when the situation actually came, they acted exactly as they had thought. So we ought to score ourselves for thinking evil thoughts, but we do not. Only when we have done wrong in action do we say, 'You went wrong,' and give penalty points. In the world, even if you break the traffic laws, you receive no penalty points unless you are caught in a crackdown; if you are caught, you receive them. But the Lord assigns penalty points every time we think an evil thought. He assigns hell penalty points. Therefore we who believe in the Lord must also assign penalty points to ourselves, just as the Lord assigns them. If we do not assign penalty points to ourselves every time we think an

evil thought, we become those bound for hell. It is like a license being suspended when the points keep piling up past the limit.

We must give ourselves penalty points every time we think an evil thought

Even within the twenty-four hours of a day, we keep committing these twelve sins. Evil thoughts we think all the time, and we think lustful thoughts, thieving thoughts, murderous thoughts, adulterous thoughts, covetous thoughts, and wicked thoughts; we think deceiving thoughts—how to deceive our parents, how to deceive our friends—and we think lewd thoughts. They say children these days do things beyond the imagination of adults. What is that? It is because they do not know their thoughts are wrong that they are doing so. We even hear stories of someone bearing a baby and selling it for money, and of the buyer reselling it at a higher price. Would the thoughts of the person who bought the baby that way be sound, or evil? What would become of that baby? Not knowing properly that man's very thoughts are wrong, people do not even know that they themselves are now going wrong. At the very least, we must admit before God that our thoughts are wrong. We must become people who know how to admit it. We must become persons of such character that we assign penalty points to our own selves.

Whatever evil thought a person may think, he gives himself not a single penalty point, while if others think evil thoughts and do evil deeds, he gives them all penalty points. It is no use for others to assign me penalty points; I must assign penalty points to my own self. God has assigned us penalty points, so we must admit it. When God assigns the penalty, saying, 'You are a human being who thinks evil thoughts. You are a human being

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bound for hell,' I too must assign the penalty to myself. Every time we think an evil thought, a lustful thought, a murderous thought, when the points pile up like this, they quickly pass the limit. Since they are twelve kinds of sin, even scoring only a little at a time takes us far over the limit. So the point is that man does not know himself. Socrates said, 'Know yourself,' but man does not know himself. He says, 'I did not do it in action; I only did it in thought'—but the very wrongness of the thought itself is what is wrong. So it is with me, and so it is with you, before God. When we go on refusing to admit those wrong thoughts, we end up carrying them into action just as we thought them. So in the end we are those bound for hell before God. Is it so, or not? It is so.

We need the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection

Therefore we need Jesus, who became the Savior; we need His receiving baptism from John the Baptist and taking over our sins; we need His being nailed to the Cross carrying those sins; and we need His dying and rising again. You and I are those who need this. We must admit it. At the very least, we must believe it with the heart. Since we can never become perfect in our actions, we must believe with the heart and receive the remission of sins. If God were to look at us with the eyes with which He sees, would we be good before God, or evil? We are evil. Are we bound for hell, or bound for heaven? We are bound for hell. Then are we those who must believe in the Lord's righteousness, or those who need not believe? We are those who must believe. Then if we believe in the Lord's righteousness with thanksgiving, are we those who have received salvation, or those who have not?

We are those who have received it. That much is certain. But the problem is that all the people of the world—I and you alike—absolutely refuse to admit that wrong thoughts are wrong. They keep thinking that only what has gone wrong in action is wrong.

If we admit that what is wrong in thought is also wrong, then when we look at our own selves, we can only admit that we are not whole, that we are imperfect, that we are those who commit sin. Then even if no one teaches us, 'You are one bound for hell. You are one who must receive the remission of sins,' we come to admit, 'I am a person who needs the Savior. I am a person who needs the Lord.' And we come to believe. You and I are such people. If you and I only know that we are such people, we are those who have received the motivation to believe in God's righteousness; and so you and I come to believe in that salvation of God, and through that very weakness we rather receive great blessing. We must give thanks before God by faith, admit the fact that our thoughts are fundamentally evil, and become those who do not follow evil thoughts to the end. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit

< Mark 7:20-23 >

"And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'"

We are living in an age when it is hard to lead a life of faith

Living in this present age, I think how hard it must be for our saints—whether young people, adults, or workers—to lead a life of faith. Even so, if we lead our lives of faith by faith, by the spirit, it is enough. If we think on the things God has done, and believe, keep, and wait on the words God has promised us, leading our lives of faith like that, it is enough. But it is a fact that we are leading our lives of faith in truly difficult circumstances. This world is now rampant with sin, and in particular, even the people who profess to believe in God have become truly greatly corrupted. They have become corrupted beyond words. These days I have been reading the book of Jeremiah, and when I look at the people who appear in Jeremiah, and at the people who appear in Malachi, I see that they had

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become all too corrupted. Among the people of Israel, those who had become priests made a shambles of offering sacrifices to God and of the work of serving God.

Even in ordinary families that do not believe in God, when they set out to offer a memorial rite to their ancestors, they give it their utmost devotion. They bathe, put their clothes in order, and compose their hearts. When the time to offer the rite comes, they tidy their surroundings and offer the rite with all their devotion gathered. But at this time, the sin of despising God was being followed by all the people of Israel, beginning with the priests and on through the prophets and the people. And the sacrifice the people of Israel offered to God was a sacrifice of fraud. The offering to be presented to God had to be a clean sacrificial offering—a sheep, a goat, or an ox. But the people of Israel offered, yes, but offered what was filthy and blemished. The people of Israel wearied of offering sacrifice to God and treated it lightly. So they brought what was lame, what would not sell even if taken out to the market, what was blind and diseased, and offered their sacrifices carelessly. So God said to the people of Israel: offer such an offering to your governor and see—would that governor accept that filthy offering? How much more, when you claim to offer sacrifice before Me, the LORD of hosts, do you present such offerings?

God told the corrupt people to return to Him

So God said that the people of Israel were committing fraud, and that He would curse them. But God said that from among the Gentiles He would raise up those who fear, love, and honor God and believe God's word, and give them blessing. God fundamentally loved the people of Israel. Even though the

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people of Israel lied readily and offered filthy offerings before God, He wanted to save them. So God made a plan, and in the New Testament era He sent John the Baptist, the servant of God who had the power of Elijah. And He sent Jesus Christ to this earth and had Him receive baptism from that John the Baptist and take over all the sins of this world, and had Him be judged on the Cross for us, saying that He would thereby remove all the sins of the people of Israel and the sins of all people, and so make you God's children and let you receive salvation.

Looking at Malachi chapters 3 and 4, God rebukes tremendously. The people of Israel, afraid, ask how then they might return to God. Then the servant of God says that they have stolen what is God's and yet live not even knowing they have stolen. When the people of Israel ask when they ever stole what is God's, he says: you live on what belongs to God, so why do you not offer the tithe before God? Offer the whole tithe and see—then God will remove the locusts for you, and keep them from destroying the produce of your land, and your land will become beautiful, so that all the nations will call you blessed. Now, telling them here to offer the tithe was not a word spoken because God needed money. Behind the word to bring the tithe there was another meaning.

God made the universe and all things and gave us the air, everything we eat, everything. He gave us life, gave us children, and gave us everything; yet though we live on what belongs to God, we neither love nor thank that God. God became our Shepherd, kept us, and became our Protector, so it is only right to thank and serve Him; but they did not do so and left God. Leaving God who created the universe, God who made us, they carved a stone, bowed down to it, and prayed to it to send down blessings. That is why the servant of God, telling them to offer the tithe, rebuked their sin. God spoke this word to mean: I give

you everything, and I keep you, and I govern all your life and death, fortune and misfortune, yet do you not ask what is not Me for blessing? That is wrong, and so you must return to Me.

But many pastors today, when people come to church, before long put them through the catechumen ceremony and baptism, and soon appoint them as deacons; and the first thing they impose is keeping the Lord's Day holy, and the second thing they stress is the tithe. They ask whether you will tithe, since they are going to appoint you a deacon. Something like the tithe is entirely natural for a saint. Because God gives us so much in our lives, and because other souls must be saved, the workers and servants offer their time and possessions for the gospel far beyond a tenth, and serve with them. What God spoke of in Malachi is to revere God and return to God. He spoke to teach us that God is the Owner of all things, the Owner of our life, the Source of blessing, and our Shepherd. But they do not receive that will of God and only stress the tithe to church members. The moment people come to church, they stress the tithe, and thanksgiving offerings, special offerings, mission offerings—as a result they just keep demanding money. What the Bible says about the tithe is to return to God and to lead a life of faith thanking God. When people receive the remission of sins, even without being told such things they come to offer the Lord more than a tenth. They offer with their bodies and offer with their time; they offer because it is needed, and they offer out of thankfulness.

The righteous overcome the world by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

What I want to say is that the saints living in this present age

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are all living in an age when it is hard to lead a life of faith. There was once a time when, come Sunday, a wave of people would head to church carrying their Bibles. But in this age, whether people attend church or not, sin has become all too rampant. Sin assails people, so that leading a life of faith is in itself truly hard. It is hard even to keep one's heart, and because we are actually living in the fierce current of sin, it is exhausting. Without the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit it is truly hard to lead a life of faith, and without thinking spiritual thoughts it is truly hard to lead a life of faith. The person who by faith keeps turning the gospel of the water and the Spirit over in his mind still manages, but those who do not believe cannot live rightly however much they may want to. He asked whether He would see believers in the last days, and it truly seems so. The Apostle Paul told Timothy that in the last days people would love money, boast, be proud, and disobey their parents, and we really are living in such an age. All over the world, all these sins are being committed this quickly and this easily. When the world grows filthy, our hearts also grow filthy, and when we come into contact with the world, we get swept along with it. Therefore we must live united with our fellow righteous as much as we can. We must live within the culture of the righteous. Not that there is anything special about the culture of the righteous: we exercise now and then, play Go, and talk among ourselves—that is all.

Even so, we the righteous need only live holding on to faith. We need only live looking to God with the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we look at this world, our hearts grow filthy and our eyes grow filthy. So at times we follow the world and then come back again. But whenever we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we overcome this world. Looking at the word of 1 John chapter 5, what is the

faith that overcomes the world? It is the faith that believes in Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood. That faith overcomes the world, overcomes the Devil, and overcomes one's own weakness. The One who keeps us is the Lord. Even when we fall into weakness and commit sin, what delivers our own selves out of all those sins is the gospel of the water and the Spirit and our Lord. Because the Lord has removed your sins and mine, because the Lord has delivered us from all those sins however lacking we may be, you and I have no sin. Therefore, just as the word says, *"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (Romans 1:17)*, we can live by faith. However filthy the world becomes, we can live green and unbending, alone if need be. As a pine tree gives off its green light even in midwinter, though the whole world turns white, we exist giving off our green. We the righteous live going against this world by believing in the righteousness of God. We live joyfully, delivering blessing to the people of the world.

Even if you should fall through weakness, do not be discouraged. Even if you have gone down a wrong path, think of the Lord. Think of how the Lord removed your sins and mine, of how great a load of sins He removed with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By faith, admit before the Lord that what went wrong went wrong, and confirm once more this gospel the Lord has given. And by believing this gospel, rise up. Shake off weakness and sin entirely. The righteous can live by faith. They never serve as slaves of the world, and they are not defeated by the world. They are not defeated by Satan the Devil either. We are victors. The Lord said, "It is finished," and said He has overcome. Therefore, as the Lord overcame the world, we too are those who overcome the world. There is nothing better than the work of preaching the gospel, than the work of serving the

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gospel. By our serving the gospel, we benefit other people. It is only that they do not know it yet; when we serve the gospel, many people of the world receive blessing.

When the Lord comes, this world will suffer destruction. In fact, before long, natural calamities will come upon the whole world. While preaching the word of Revelation, I also preached much about natural catastrophes. However much science may develop, that is only man's story; this world goes exactly according to the word of God. This world has already become very much as God's word says. But because we must preach the gospel to the full, some time must yet remain. The world is moving more and more into a system in which the whole globe is bound into one and managed. But we can live. God keeps God's Church and blesses it. Even now God is giving many blessings to God's Church, and He will give still more blessings hereafter. In leading our lives of faith, we must do so not by the flesh but by the spirit. God is Spirit; so we must remember, believe, and hold fast the word of what sins God delivered you and me from and how He did so, and what blessings He has promised to give us, and live so. If you look at yourself, your own self is only endlessly weak. So we must think of the Lord. We must think of what the Lord has done for us and what the Lord will do for us hereafter.

What comes out of a man's heart defiles him

We have read Mark chapter 7, from verse 20 to verse 23. *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a*

man" (Mark 7:21–23). The Lord speaks about what comes out of a man's heart. While the Lord was eating food with His disciples, some people slandered the Lord and the Lord's disciples. They slandered them as filthy people, because they ate food without even washing their hands. So Jesus spoke to those who were slandering. He said that it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man, but that the evil thoughts that come out of a man's heart—fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, a lewd heart, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness—defile a man. The Lord was saying that all the sins in the heart that man was born carrying through his parents—that filth—go out of the mouth and out into action and defile a man.

In practice, we often do not have a firm grasp of this concept. The theory that man is fundamentally good outnumbers the theory that man is fundamentally evil. The scholars who hold that man is born good say that man was born good, but the environment being bad, he is stained with evil and does evil. Man is born with a heart as white as an angel's, they say, but living in this world he keeps seeing bad things, so his heart gets spotted and stained with evil. Looking at people who have done very evil deeds, they say they became so because they were born in bad surroundings. But if you understand it that way, you end up deceived by your own self. Jesus is God who made the universe and is our Savior. And that God says to us mankind that every filthy heart is inside the heart of man. Man was fundamentally born having inherited sin from his parents at birth—born carrying inside him the heart that commits fornication, steals, murders, covets, commits adultery, and deceives, along with lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness—and so, as he ages, he comes to follow and chase these sins more and more. Therefore man fundamentally

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defiles himself by his own self. This word the Lord spoke is right.

I too was born into this world, and when I was young I learned such things daily from my parents. I was taught to greet grown-ups well when I saw them and not to do harm to others. While learning I said, 'Yes, yes,' and learned well; but when adolescence came and I got older, I wanted to see strange things and became interested in the opposite sex. And when I got older still, I carried what was in my heart into action. I did it drawn by instinct, but when I looked at myself, I had done something very bad. Yet at that time I shifted it all onto the other person—'It was not I who did such a deed; the other person allured and seduced me, and I did it without even knowing'—and lived thinking I must not do so again. Then I came to believe in Jesus and was attending church, and one day, while witnessing to a woman, I discovered my fundamental inner heart rising up. At that time I did not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so I was speaking of the Cross of Jesus, and I discovered something else arising inside me. What it was, was a fornicating heart, an adulterous heart.

With my mouth I was witnessing to that woman, boasting of Jesus and telling her to come out to church, but with my heart I wanted to court that woman. How tormented I was to discover that such a heart was inside me as I witnessed! When I did not see her it was fine, but when I actually met her and talked, there I was, speaking of Jesus, and this adulterous heart would rise up. I had not known myself that such a heart was in me. So, looking at my heart, I would shift it onto the other person: 'This woman must have a lustful heart.' Why? Because condemning myself was painful, I looked for the reason in the other person. At that time the gospel of the water and the Spirit was not in me, so I had no way to solve the sin in my heart, and I shifted it all onto the other person. But the Scriptures said, 'Do not commit

adultery. Do not murder,' so I must not do it—and yet whenever I looked into my heart, it was appalling.

At that time I did not know that such hearts were in my heart. I did not know there were such things as a fornicating heart, an adulterous heart, an envious heart, a wicked heart, and a covetous heart. I did not know that these sins were fundamentally inside me; I thought that though these sins did exist, they only arose for a moment. But as Jesus says, these sins are fundamentally in the heart of man, and if one is a human being, all these sins rise up. Do evil thoughts rise up, or not? They do. Does a fornicating heart rise up, or not? It does. I thought only that the heart of the flesh was rising up for a moment. But how does Jesus settle it? The fornicating heart is fundamentally in the heart of man. When a man is born, through his parents he inherits the constitution of the body and inherits also the heart of sin. But when he is young, he has no capacity to exercise that sin, so it lies latent; then, as he ages, what is in the heart rises up at any time. One heart rises and passes, and then another heart rises. The fornicating heart rises and goes back in, and the covetous heart rises; and when one barely suppresses it, saying, 'You must not do such things,' this time the adulterous heart rises; and when one shakes that off, the wicked heart rises; and next the deceiving heart rises. When one presses it down hard, saying, 'Why deceive? Say honestly that what you did wrong was wrong,' the lewd heart rises; and when one says no, the glaring heart of an evil eye rises.

Is there not a saying that when one's cousin buys land, one's stomach aches? When someone is said to be doing well, we want to slander him; with our mouths we congratulate him, but inwardly our stomach aches. Still, knowing that it is wrong, we cast it off. Then the proud heart rises; and when we press down the proud heart, the foolish heart rises; and when we press that

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down, another rises—like this they keep rising up all twelve months of the year. So it is we human beings who commit these twelve sins even within a single day. This is what you and I look like. But in the past I did not know that I was so. Before I met the Lord I did not know. Even while attending church I did not know. But after I believed in Jesus, I knew. I knew it by experience, and later, when I looked at the word, it was written so. I realized: I am such a human being, and yet how thoroughly I pretended to be good and pretended to be holy. This is man. This is the nature of man. It is not that a man kills a person because he received a wrong education and grew up in a bad environment; fundamentally man has a murdering heart, so when a certain situation comes, that heart rises up and he carries it into action—and that is murder.

That is why, over a whole lifetime, man kills an enormous number of people, in his heart or in fact. A man like Hitler seized the power of the world and carried the sin in his heart into action, while the man without power fails to carry it into action and holds it down in thought. That is the only difference; fundamentally man is one who murders all his life, one who does evil deeds, one who commits adultery, one who covets, one who steals—fundamentally we are all such people. Then what must be done? That is why man must receive the remission of sins.

God promised to send Elijah before the judgment

Let us look at the word of Malachi chapter 4. *"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. "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" (Malachi 4:1–6).

Because the people of Israel committed so much sin and served idols, God determined to curse them. He said that the day like a fiercely burning furnace would come, and all the proud and all who do wickedly would be like stubble. He would burn them all in fire. He would put them into the fire that is never quenched. He said that the day which was coming would burn them up and leave them neither root nor branch—meaning He would judge them completely and utterly, down to the root. It is a word that He would burn them with a furnace fire that melts even iron. Being like stubble means that, like dry grass, they burn up entirely when put into the fire. Those who serve idols, those who have sin in their hearts and yet do not return before God, He judges like this. But to the one who acknowledges, fears, honors, and loves God; who hears what God says and obeys; who receives by faith the remission of sins and all the blessings God has given—to him He gives salvation. But for the person who hears the word of the truth that removes all his sins and yet, by not believing, has not received the remission of sins, the day is coming when he is judged by God.

To fear God means to revere and love God and yet also to be in awe of Him. Those who, though made by God, do not honor

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God, do not love Him, do not fear Him, and do not follow His word receive judgment and enter the everlasting fire of hell. But He said, *"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" (Malachi 4:2)*. When a person receives the remission of sins, his heart leaps for joy. His heart is glad. This is exactly what this word means. And in verses 5 and 6 He said that before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD, He would send the prophet Elijah. Our God, while rebuking the sins of people—the sins of the people of Israel and of the priests and the prophets—also spoke the word of salvation. While rebuking those who were serving idols and those who had sin and yet pretended to have none, He told them that there is judgment, and together with it He also opened the way for them to receive the remission of sins. Whom did God say He would send for their salvation? He said He would send the prophet Elijah. And according to that promise, God sent to this earth John the Baptist, who is Elijah, and then sent Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father. He sent John the Baptist first and then sent His own Son, and He had His Son receive, through John the Baptist, the baptism by which He took over all the sins of this world. And He had Him be crucified unto death, and raised His Son again, and so washed clean the sins of us mankind, the sins of the whole world. As lye makes clothes clean, God has saved us wholly from sin.

Let us read Matthew chapter 11, verses 10 through 14. *"For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' 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" (Matthew 11:10–14). Who is that Elijah whom God said He would send for our salvation? He is precisely this man, John the Baptist. John the Baptist is the promised one, recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures. Concerning John the Baptist, Jesus said that among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist. All people were born through women. Only Adam and Eve were made directly by God; all other people were born into this earth through women. And among those born of women, the greatest one is John the Baptist. Why do the Scriptures tell us this? God said this in order to establish John the Baptist as the representative of mankind. Then why did He do so? He established John the Baptist as the representative of mankind in order to pass the sins of mankind on to Jesus Christ. Before the final judgment of God comes, every person must meet Jesus Christ. And before meeting Jesus Christ, he must know who John the Baptist is.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John

Let us look from Matthew chapter 3, verse 13. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?'" (Matthew 3:13–14).* This time when Jesus received baptism was when Jesus was about thirty years old. Why did Jesus receive baptism at thirty? A priest of the Old Testament could take up the duties of the tabernacle only when he turned thirty. Jesus is the only Son of

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God the Father, but He is the High Priest of the Kingdom of Heaven. That Jesus came to this earth to take over our sins onto His own body. The reason Jesus sought to receive baptism from John the Baptist is that John was the representative of mankind and the greatest of mankind. John the Baptist, representing mankind, gave baptism to Jesus. To pass all the sins of mankind on to Jesus, John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus, and Jesus sought to receive it. Because John the Baptist was a man sent by God, he knew well who Jesus was, and he also knew why Jesus sought to receive baptism.

Looking at the word of Matthew chapter 3, verse 15, it says, *"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" (Matthew 3:15)*. Jesus, in order to receive baptism and take over all the sins of this world, was saying: permit it now; by your giving Me baptism and My receiving baptism from you, all righteousness—every right thing—is fulfilled. Here, all righteousness, every right thing, is precisely this: that Jesus, by taking over through baptism all your sins and mine and the sins of all the people of mankind, makes us mankind sinless. Jesus came to this earth in order to take over completely, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, as the Savior who came for mankind, both the sin inherited into the heart and all the sins of a whole lifetime carried into action. When Jesus received baptism, all the sins of this world passed on to Jesus. What happened when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist? The sins of all people passed onto Jesus' head, onto Jesus' body. Jesus is fundamentally One without sin; He is God who does not commit sin. Yet that God, to save man, came to this earth clothed in human flesh and, by receiving baptism through John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, took over all the sins of man. This word is exceedingly important. At

this time, whose sins passed on to Jesus? My sins passed on, and your sins passed on. The sin inherited through our parents, the sins committed from birth until now, and all the sins to be committed until we die—all passed on. Not only all the sins of our whole life but all the sins of mankind passed on to Jesus. From Adam until the time mankind ends, the sins of every person passed on to Jesus through the baptism John the Baptist gave. This we must know.

My sins passed on at this time. I am a person who commits many sins and has many shortcomings. Yet the reason I can do the work of a pastor like this and serve the Lord is that the Lord received baptism at this time and took over all my sins. Because all my sins passed on to Jesus at this time, I have become a person without sin. Jesus took over and bore your sins and mine, the sins of your ancestors, the sins you commit tomorrow, the sins of your parents and your children—the sins of all people—and fulfilled all righteousness. By Jesus' receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and by John the Baptist's giving baptism to Jesus, all righteousness was fulfilled. These two together fulfilled all righteousness.

Let us look at the word of John chapter 1, verse 29. *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).* The day after he gave baptism to Jesus, John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and testified, Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. How could Jesus bear the sin of the world? Jesus did not promise our salvation one-sidedly, with words alone. God promised our salvation from the Old Testament—and by what method did He promise it? For a person to be washed of his sin, he must lay his hands on the sacrificial offering and pass the sin to it; when the high priest lays his hands on the sacrificial offering, all the sins of the people

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pass on to the sacrificial offering—this is how He promised. God promised like this in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament, according to that promise, the Lord came to this earth and fulfilled that promise. As the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament received the laying on of hands and took over sins, the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist and took over all the sins of mankind. So John the Baptist, seeing Jesus, testified: the Son of God, clothed in human flesh, came to this earth, received baptism from me, took over all the sins of mankind, and now carries the sin of the world and goes toward the Cross—that One is the Lamb of God. The Lord came to this earth to become the sacrificial lamb in order to remove your sins and mine. Because this is so perfect a truth and so astonishing an event, it is a greater event than the sun suddenly losing all its light and the whole world going dark. This event is the greatest event for mankind, the most joyful news, the greatest blessed news.

Jesus bore all the sins of mankind through His baptism, and carrying the sin of the world, He went to the Cross. Looking at John chapter 19, verse 17, it says, *"And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center" (John 19:17–18)*, and then it says, *"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:28–30)*. The reason the Lord was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, said, "It is finished," and died is that the Lord had received baptism from John the Baptist

at the Jordan River and taken over the sins of mankind. Jesus received baptism and so bore the sin of the world, and because He had borne that sin, He was nailed to the Cross and died saying, "It is finished." And Jesus rose again from the dead and became our true Savior. All your hideous sins and mine, all the sins we commit over a whole lifetime, the sins committed knowingly and the sins committed unknowingly—our Lord washed them all away with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Not only from the fundamental sin that is in the heart but from all the sins to be judged through actually committing sin, the Lord has saved us. To save us from all these sins, the Lord received baptism, was crucified, and rose from the dead. He completely finished the work of removing our sins.

It is an appointed order that a man is once born and once dies, and after that, He said, there is the judgment. When we are born into this world, carry sin in our hearts, live committing that sin, and die, there is without fail the judgment. We go to hell. When a person has died, what is the most important matter concerning him? Whether this person knew the secret and the meaning of the baptism the Lord received from John the Baptist; whether he knew that Jesus carried this person's sins, went to the Cross, was nailed there, and died saying, "It is finished"; whether he knew and believed that the Lord rose from the dead and became this person's Savior, and so went before God—or went before God with sin still in him: this is the greatest concern. If this person knew and believed that God the Father removed all his sins through the baptism His Son received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, then he went before God as a righteous person without sin. If he stood before God with that faith, that life was a successful life. He is a person who succeeded hundreds of millions of times more greatly than any king of the world, any rich man, any figure the people of the

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world respect, and he is the happiest person.

For a person to receive the remission of sins, he must first know what kind of sinner he is before God. Next, he must know that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist. He must believe that when Jesus received baptism from John to fulfill all righteousness, all his sins passed on. He must believe that Jesus took over all our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist; that carrying those sins He was nailed to the Cross, said, "It is finished," and died for us; and that He rose from the dead and became our eternal Savior. When we do, we come to receive salvation.

Jesus saved us with the everlasting sacrifice offered once and for all

Your sins have passed on to Jesus Christ. All my sins, too, have passed on to Jesus Christ. That is why, lacking as I am, I can speak before you as a pastor. I speak not with anything else but with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If it were not this truth, what would I have to speak of before you? Lacking as I am, God has opened my mouth and had me preach this truth. Boasting of this is my greatest joy. The Lord bore all the sins of the whole world, was judged for them, and removed them all; the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist, took over all the sins of mankind, and fulfilled the right work; all you people of this world, your sins have all passed on to Jesus through John the Baptist, and Jesus carried all those sins, went to the Cross, was nailed there, died, and rose again, and has accomplished salvation entirely; you no longer have sin—thus I open my mouth and preach the salvation the Lord accomplished.

God is our Creator and our Shepherd. God is the Source of

love. It says that God is love, and that it is not that we loved God, but that God loved us. Because the Lord loved us first, we can love the Lord. Man does not love without receiving love. If God had not loved us, we could not love God either. But God loved you and me, and so had all your sins and mine passed on to His own Son and had Him judged for them all, and removed all our sins. That is why we, too, can love the Lord.

Let us look at the word of Hebrews chapter 10, verse 1. *"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect" (Hebrews 10:1)*. The completion of the Law cannot come by sacrifices. By laying hands on the sacrificial offering daily and passing sins on to it, one cannot be made perfect. So God the Father promised our salvation with His word and fulfilled it just so. Let us look at Hebrews chapter 10, verses 5 through 7. *"Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come— In the volume of the book it is written of Me— To do Your will, O God"' " (Hebrews 10:5–7)*. Who is the One who came here to do the will of God? Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, came to this earth according to the will of God the Father in order to offer His own body and remove our sins.

Looking at Hebrews chapter 10, verses 9 and 10, it says, *"Then He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:9–10)*. Because daily prayers of repentance cannot do it, the Lord came to this earth once and removed the sins of mankind once and for all. Jesus

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received baptism from John the Baptist once and for all and bore the sin of the world; He went to the Cross, shed His blood, and died once and for all; and He rose from the dead and became our eternal Savior. Through the offering of the body of Christ once and for all, we have been made holy forever. Jesus Christ came to this earth and, through His thirty-three years of life, completely removed all our sins. Therefore, believers have been made holy once and for all. It means we have received the washing of sin once and for all by faith. It is the past perfect tense. Believe this fact, I ask you.

Hebrews chapter 10, verse 11 says, *"And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins" (Hebrews 10:11)*. With that sacrifice offered daily in the Old Testament, it cannot be done. In the New Testament era as well, going out to church daily and offering the daily prayer of repentance—'Lord, please remit my sins; I have sinned again today'—cannot do it. Weeping cannot do it, prayers of repentance cannot do it, mountain prayers cannot do it, and fasting prayers cannot do it. Hurting one's body cannot do it, and even starving to death while fasting cannot do it. These can never take sins away. It cannot be done by man's effort. We human beings are exactly like a man who cannot swim, fallen into a deep river. With no one to save him, he has fallen into the deep waters. God saved such people as us through His own Son. The Lord came to this earth, bore our sins once and for all, and removed them once and for all. He alone is your true Savior. So it says, *"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12)*. Through His life of thirty-three years, Jesus offered the everlasting sacrifice that saves us. Jesus Christ was born on this earth; received baptism and so took on all the sins of mankind; was nailed to the Cross and died, saying, "It is

finished"; and rose from the dead—and so offered the everlasting sacrifice.

And it says that He has now sat down at the right hand of God. It is a word that Jesus has removed the sins of mankind forever. Whatever the race, whatever the people, He has removed the sins of every person. He bore even the sins of the very evil person at whom all people point their fingers. The sins of your parents, the sins you yourself have committed living until now, and the sins you commit as you live on—Jesus bore them all. Then may we commit sin freely? That is not so. Sin is not something one commits because someone tells one to; one commits it because one has it. And the person who has not received the remission of sins commits more sins in order to hide that sin. Who commits fewer sins—the person who has received the remission of all his sins by believing this truth, or the person who has not received the remission of all his sins by not believing this truth? When you come to know it, the person who has received the remission of all his sins commits fewer sins. Because the one who has received the remission of sins by believing this truth has nothing to do with sin, he now wants to live doing righteous work. Because man resembles the image of God, he wants to live doing righteous work, living a holy life, doing worthwhile work and right work. Ask anyone—there will be no one who says, 'I want to live my whole life committing nothing but sin.' 'Though this is what I look like, I want to live for righteous work; I want to live a life that other people can respect'—nearly everyone speaks like that.

"*For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14)*. Who is the One who became the sacrificial offering for us? It is Jesus. The name Jesus means the Savior. The word Christ means the King anointed with oil. The Creator of the universe became a man and came to this earth

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as the Savior. And He offered His own body as the sacrificial offering before God the Father, taking over the sins of mankind onto His own body through baptism. And He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, came to death, and rose again, and so saved us. If the Lord saved me, He saved you also; and if He saved you, He also saved all the people lesser than you. The Lord did not remove one person's sins and leave another person's; He removed the sins of all mankind. And after that, the Lord says to us: believe; I am your Savior; if you believe, there is the remission of sins. He tells us to believe the right work God has done, the righteousness of God. He is proclaiming to us to believe that He loved us, took over our sins once and for all with baptism, and removed them by being nailed to the Cross.

"But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,' then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:15–18). God is a just God. Because He is just, He sent His own Son to this earth and saved every person. He had His Son receive baptism through John the Baptist and so take over all the sins of mankind, had Him be nailed to the Cross and receive the judgment for all sins, and raised Him from the dead, and so made Him the Savior of us mankind. That is why He said, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Because His own Son has saved us, He does not ask us about our sins. You and I are weak human beings, so tomorrow, as we live on, we may do wrong again. We do wrong not on purpose but because we are weak. If the Lord had said, 'By your faith I remit only your sins up to this very moment, and the sins you commit from tomorrow I will count again,' there would be no perfect

salvation for us. But the Lord saved us once and for all, forever. That is why He said that where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin. Since He has remitted all the sins of this world, there is no longer any sacrifice to be offered for sin. Every time our soul's shortcomings show themselves in our life, we are to say: Lord, I have committed sin; I have done wrong; but You wrote in the Scriptures that You bore this sin too when You received baptism from John and were judged for it on the Cross; I believe this word; thank You. Rather, He tells us to give thanks before the Lord. And He tells us not to live buried in those wrongs but to offer ourselves to righteous work.

In Malachi chapter 4, verse 2, He said that to those who fear His name the Sun of Righteousness would arise sending forth healing rays, and they would go out and leap like calves released from the stall. What is that name? It is Jesus Christ. The word Jesus means the Savior, and the word Christ means the One anointed with oil, that is, the King of kings. The Creator who made the universe came to this earth clothed in human flesh as our Savior, and for you and me He received baptism, was crucified, and rose from the dead, and so saved us. On the one who believes in that Jesus—on the one who loves that Jesus and believes with thanksgiving what He has done—the blessing of God comes. He said that He would shine the healing rays on him and give him the joy of leaping like a calf released from the stall.

Your sins passed on when Jesus Christ received baptism. This is fact. What can most surely pass the sins of mankind on to Jesus is baptism and baptism alone. This is the only way there is. The word Passover means passing over. If our sins are with us, we must receive the judgment; but when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the sins of all mankind—your sins and mine—passed over to Jesus Christ. Then, by believing this fact, we have no sin. A person's sin is not something that

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disappears by a person's emotions; it is gone because it actually passed on to Jesus. Whether our emotions run hot or not makes no difference at all. Knowing and believing this fact is faith. By knowing and believing this truth, we can be certain that your sins and mine have been washed away. The Lord has saved us.

The Lord has become your Savior and mine. I truly give thanks before the Lord. We who could only die eternally, we who could only be judged because of sin, have been wholly saved from sin. God loved us and saved us with the water and the blood. Our Lord received baptism, was crucified, and rose from the dead, and so saved us. The Lord has given you and me the new heaven and the new earth. God folds up and does away with the first heaven and the first earth, as one crumples a picture drawn on paper, and He makes the new heaven and the new earth and gives them to us, who have been saved by believing this truth. Those who receive into their hearts the salvation with which God has saved us enter the new heaven and the new earth and live with the Lord forever and ever. This God has planned, and this He fulfills in full. He said that there He has built an enormous number of houses made of all kinds of jewels, and makes the water of the fountain of life flow; and on both sides of it, He said, the trees bear new fruit every month according to their seasons. To have us live there forever is God's purpose toward us and the purpose for which He saved us.

What I want to ask of you is to believe. Even if you do not know the whole Bible, believe the words you have heard. 'I do not know much else, but hearing this word, it is really true; I believe'—if you believe like that, it is enough. When you believe this word with your heart, the Lord knows your heart and sets His seal on your heart. He says: right; your faith is right; you believe that I have saved you. The Lord sees us believing and rejoices. He has removed the sins of the whole of mankind, and

when we recognize and accept that merit, God is pleased. So God gives blessing to the person who believes. Because by faith he has no sin, God makes him God's child and gives him the blessing of everlasting life. God sends down on the one who believes every spiritual blessing of heaven in its season and is together with him on this earth as well. And when we come to go before the Lord, we live with the Lord, enjoying every blessing in the new heaven and the new earth the Lord has prepared.

It is not far off. It is not that we should believe in the future; we must believe now. Now we are preaching the gospel to all the people of our country and of the whole world. Many churches of this world today only tell people to bring out offerings and do not teach them the word of God. They demand only such things as daily prayers of repentance and mountain prayers. Having become priests, they ought to teach the way to receive the remission of sins—how can they tell church members to receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance and fasting prayers? If a person falls ill and goes to a doctor, and the doctor, instead of healing him, tells the patient to see to it himself, how can that be? Man may deceive man, but God does not deceive us. God has loved you and me. He has saved you and me. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Humble your heart to the lowest place and look to the Lord's compassion

< Mark 7:24-30 >

"From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, 'Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.' And she answered and said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs.' Then He said to her, 'For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.' And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed."

I would like to share the lesson being taught in the passage we have read today. This age we are now living in, as you know well and as the scientists are saying, is an age of catastrophes. It is too dreadful to speak of in a loud voice. They say the sea level will rise by several meters in a few years, so it is hard even to say we should prepare for it. The melting of the ice at the South

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Pole and the North Pole is a problem, but they say that even the snow piled up all twelve months of the year on the high mountains melts and raises the sea level still higher. What shall we do when it comes to that? What must be done before then is to preach the gospel. While it is still peaceful, before much of the land is submerged under the sea, should we not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit all the more? I believe this is the right answer. Sowing the seed in the time of peace and reaping the fruit in the time of tribulation—this is the work of preaching the gospel. This is the farmer's wisdom and God's wisdom. What skill do we have? Shall we, because we are impatient, board a plane and travel the world scattering leaflets? There is nothing we can do about it. We must simply preach the gospel more, just as we have been doing until now.

In the last days above all, we must not fall away from preaching the gospel

But one thing we must keep in mind: we have been preaching the gospel until now, and we must not fall away from this preaching of the gospel. It says that the nearer the end draws, the more we should strive to gather together. There must be no such thing as serving this gospel and then, having now drawn near the finish line, falling away, losing the way, and becoming an adversary to the righteousness of God and to the gospel preaching of God's Church, standing on the Devil's side and being used there. If we do not stay sharply alert, that can happen easily enough. Because we ourselves are weak, it can happen easily enough. I believe the most fitting word for you and me right now is this word. The needed word ought to be preached first. People keep saying it is really the last days, the last days—

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and the end really is drawing near. Yet how could it be right, at this point, to fall away from preaching the gospel because one has many thoughts of one's own, because one is smart, because one is so distinguished, and so to become one who opposes God and opposes the Church? Because that must not happen, I cannot but preach this word. It is the word God causes me to preach.

Living in this world, we will come to face many problems. But whatever happens, we must unite with God's Church, unite with God, and unite our hearts with God's people and servants, and preach this gospel until the day the Lord comes, and meet the Lord. It says that in just a little while the Lord will come. When you look back over the time gone by, does it not seem that even long years have passed in a moment? The time that remains will also pass quickly. If you ask whether that moment is the end of the world, I cannot say, like the time-fixed doomsday advocates, that it will be such-and-such a month, day, and hour. I do not know. Only, it is drawing nearer and nearer. The marathon runner is approaching the finish. What is clear is that the speed is fast, and it is coming nearer faster still. How we ought to live in this last time is what today's passage tells us.

The Syro-Phoenician woman admitted that she was a dog

After Jesus said that what comes out of the heart of man is this evil and this filthy, He entered a certain house and was staying there without showing Himself, and there was a woman who came looking for Jesus. That person was a Gentile, a Greek of the Syro-Phoenician people. A Greek is not a Jew but a person of another nation, a Gentile. This person came and pleaded that her daughter had a demon and that she wished Jesus to heal her.

Having heard the report that He made those with demons well and even raised the dead, she came and made her earnest request. Jesus spoke to this woman: *"But Jesus said to her, 'Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs'" (Mark 7:27)*. Jesus was then preaching the word of God to the lost people of God in the nation of Israel and working signs and wonders for them. But when a Gentile, a Greek, came and earnestly begged Him to heal her daughter, Jesus spoke that way. It is not good, He said, to give the children's bread to the dogs. To put it simply: you are a dog. But this woman, on hearing the word 'dog,' said, *"Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."* Jesus heard this woman's words and said, *"For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter" (Mark 7:29)*. When the woman went back, the demon had gone out of her daughter. When she said that the dogs too, staying under their master's table, eat the crumbs of the bread the children were eating, Jesus said: for this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.

This word is about who you and I are before God. It is telling us that we were Gentiles, that we were not God's people, that we were not the circumcised, and that we were those who had to go to hell because of our sins. Yet this woman said that even the dogs under the children's table pick up and eat the crumbs the children were eating. She admitted before the Lord what her own self was. Then what are you and I before God? Spiritually speaking, we could be dogs and we could be ostriches. Looking at the Old Testament Scriptures, the ostrich too is counted among the unclean animals. Now, the word Jesus spoke to this woman was a word that lowered her to the utmost. It means: you are a dog. But this woman said: Yes; I am a dog; please heal my daughter. Do you and I think that spiritually we really are dogs

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before God? The question is whether we really know what we look like and lower ourselves and are humble before Jesus.

When this woman said this word, Jesus granted her wish. Jesus did the same when we received the remission of sins. When we admitted of ourselves that we were dogs, Jesus removed our sins. When we did not admit that we were dogs, He absolutely did not remove our sins. We are not merely sinners; we are those who must go to hell. When I admitted that I was a worthless person even in this world, and that—however other people might see me—when I looked at my own self, I was a being that had to disappear from this world and was fit even for hell, the Lord had compassion on us, delivered us from sin, and made us God's children. It is really so. Yet there are many people who think that they themselves are not dogs. If we have received the remission of sins, we are no longer dogs. But before we received the remission of sins, we were clearly dogs. The Jews regarded the dog as the lowest animal, the filthiest being. Why is the dog so? It eats again what it has vomited up while eating. Other animals do not do so. An ox, for instance, only chews the cud; it does not bring it outside. A dog eats, spits it out, and eats it again.

We too must lower ourselves to the utmost before the Lord

Though we have received the remission of sins and are now no longer dogs, the question is whether, as to our fundamental self, we admit that we ourselves are dogs before the Lord. There are people who, when receiving the remission of sins before the Lord, confess: I am a dog, and among dogs the lowliest dog. Even dogs have ranks. There is the dog that is loved by its master,

and there is the dog that is beaten to death by its master. In any case, we were dogs before the Lord. Not lives like a dog's—we were dogs originally. Every one of us is one who must at least once confess before the Lord: I am a dog; not a dog that receives love, but a dog to be beaten to death. Not doing so, and calling oneself a decent person, is the real problem.

I was not a decent person. When I looked at myself, I thought I was one who had to disappear from this world. Not that I did very wicked things to others, but in my younger days I had a bit of a disposition to pass the time doing nothing. I hated studying, and there was nothing to do, so when I was bored I would go to a place of amusements and sit there passing the time. Living that way, I thought about whether a human being like me ought to keep on living like this, whether I was a human being needed in this world or not, and I reached a conclusion. I was a human being not needed. So I said to my friends: looking at you, you seem to be human beings this society does not need; if I and you disappeared, this society would become a clean society; you—go into the mountains and do not come down; and you—since you will not turn out a proper man either, go to a place where men do not even marry; I too ought to go somewhere, but I do not know whether they would take me in. There was a time when I lived talking like that. Even if I tried to do something, I had no hill to lean on and no capital, and there was nothing worth doing. The hardest thing was that, having been born into this world, I had nothing worth doing. After that, I met the Lord. I am a person bound for hell; have compassion on me—I prayed like that, and the Lord met me through the word. At that time I believed only in the blood of the Cross, but it was written in the Scriptures that the Lord had received baptism from John and been given my sins, taking them upon Himself. I came to know and believe that the Lord took on my sins with His baptism, was

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crucified and died, and rose again, and became my Savior; and so I received the remission of sins, and I am now following the Lord.

The Lord uses the humble person

The person who thinks he himself is decent cannot be used before the Lord. The Lord uses the humble person. Looking at 1 Peter chapter 5, it says, *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:6)*. Who is used after receiving the remission of sins and entering the Church? Who is counted precious before the Lord and used? The humble person. Not the person who works well, but the humble person. People who work well are very many in this world. But the person whom the Lord can use is the person whose heart is prepared. The person who says, 'Lord, I am a dog. If the Lord tells me to fetch the ball, I will fetch the ball, and I will do as I am told'—such a person is used preciously before the Lord.

I would like to think of the word I preached at the outset together with this word. I said that I fear there may be people who, having served the Lord well all this time, now that the time to greet the Lord has all but come—when the Lord is coming right up to the door out there—quit the work of serving the gospel at this point. The one who receives the remission of sins before the Lord and is used is the humble person. Then what kind of person is the humble person? It is the person who says: I will do as the Master bids; use me in the place where it is best for You to use me; when You use me, Lord, use me with an easy heart; I have nothing of my own to assert before the Lord; there is nothing great about me, and even if there were something

great, I have nothing of myself to put forward. The remission of sins, too, one can receive as the grace the Lord gives when one is humble before the Lord, and being used before the Lord after receiving the remission of sins is also received when one is humble. If instead one is distinguished, as one thinks, and keeps thinking oneself unrecognized, one ends up quitting the work the Lord bids one do. 'I am too tired to do it. Since they do not recognize me, I will not work here'—so it goes. In the world, they say one lays down one's life for the person who recognizes one. In olden days a certain general laid down his life for the king who had recognized him. But we must serve the Lord and follow Him until the day the Lord comes, and we must be humble.

A master sets his servant a task, and if he is faithful in that task, entrusts him with more work. That is how the work inside the Church is. He sets someone a task, and if he does it well, entrusts him with the next task, and then the next, and so on. But people whose hearts have gone wrong say: I have this much ability—why do you not set me such work, and instead set me work anyone can do? How could that be right? Such a person is not entrusted with work. For if you set such a person to work, he may bear it well up to a point, but his own thoughts enter in, and at the last he ruins the work. It is invariably so. You too will ruin precisely the work you think you do well, because of your own thoughts. So even in setting work, it is set appropriately. If someone is not faithful in the work he has been given, no other work can be entrusted to him either.

What kind of person is the most precious in the Church? The person who believes in God's righteousness and submits before God, the person who follows well by faith, the person who obeys—this is the precious person. Though the work be repetitive, the person who obeys and does his assigned work well

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is the precious worker. Looking around in the Church, there are also brothers and sisters who, while talking, say the content backwards and leave behind sayings that become standing jokes. Hearing them, laughter comes, but that person spoke sincerely. Though he speaks backwards and leaves behind such sayings, when you look at the things he does, you would not believe how faithfully he does the work he has been given. Even a brother or sister whom we among ourselves—like acorns comparing their heights—might slightly look down on, if he is doing his assigned work faithfully, is, as I see it, not one bit inferior even when compared with the distinguished workers who do everything well. It is precious. He gives us joy, and receives love, and is faithful before the Lord—how precious that is! What would happen without him? Would the work get done just because there are a few people who work well? When a few who are said to do well gather, fights break out every day. When those gather who each say of themselves that they do this field well, it is fights every day.

Unhappiness begins when you think you are better

With the time of the Lord's coming all but here, do not think, comparing yourself with that person, that you are better than that person. From then on unhappiness comes calling. Better—what is better about you? That brother or sister has many precious parts that I do not have, and one's own self has many strengths that he does not have. Seen before the Lord, we are of the same rank. It is the same on both sides. What is precious is how humbly one obeys before the Lord, does one's assigned work faithfully, and submits well to order; it is not that one is more precious and another less precious. With the Lord's coming all

but here, if there is a person in the Church who has received the remission of sins and still keeps until now the heart that thinks himself better, he is the one who dies. His own heart becomes uncomfortable and tormented, and he dies. Why did the people who left the church leave? Looking carefully around the church, they say, there are only deficient people. The church does not recognize them, they say, and recognizes only people lesser than they. To quote the words of a certain person who left: his eyes, he said, were 1.5 times faster than other people's. Since his eyes were 1.5 times faster than the ordinary person's, even if another person had clearly seen a thing, if it was wrong as he saw it, it was wrong. Since with those 1.5-times-faster eyes he pressed down on the other person in everything, other people looked trifling and he himself looked high. But since the elders of the church did not recognize him and recognized people he considered lesser than himself, he could not stay in the church, and for this one reason alone a person can leave the church. It is real.

Being distinguished himself, and seeing that the church does not recognize him, he packs his bags, saying he must go to a place that recognizes him. I, on the contrary, am so utterly deficient that there is no place in the world that recognizes me, and that is why I stay here to the end. Look at the Syro-Phoenician woman here. My daughter has a demon; please heal my daughter. It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Yes; even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the children's table. This is the confession of faith. I am a dog; let me too eat a few of the crumbs—this is what she is saying. And at that the Lord said: it is done; because you have said this word, go home—and the demon went out and the sickness was healed. The point is that the Lord wants us really to submit with the heart. If you try to become high of yourself, you will never

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become high. Humble yourselves, and in due time He will exalt you. This is the word of promise He speaks to you and me who have received the remission of sins. Because you have said this word, your daughter is healed. When we really are like the Syro-Phoenician woman, so it comes to be.

The confession of the lowered person is the confession of faith

It is a little embarrassing to tell this kind of story, but let us try it once. When one of our workers receives ordination as a pastor, it is not because he has some great qualification; the ordination is given so that he may bear the duties of a pastor together with us. But there was a person who said, like a joke, that he ought to have received ordination as a pastor long ago and they were only now doing it for him—but that it was fortunate they were doing it even now. If it was like a joke, it is all right, but if it was like his true feeling, he would have to take it back. Before the Lord, such a heart must not be. A pastor is, in the end, one who works so that what you do is not in vain and so that you receive love and blessing before God. A pastor does not lord it over people. He serves. As the word says—when you were younger, you did as you wished, but when you are old, another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish—in the end it is serving for the preaching of the gospel and going in front; there is nothing more to it. In fact we were ones who had been dogs, and yet people attach the title of honor to our names when they call us, so we can only be thankful. Where is there a loftier title of honor than that? To hear ourselves called with that title of honor, we must do well. Our honored pastors, evangelists, brothers, and sisters—is it not so?

We must engrave the words the Lord speaks like this. This must soak into our bones. We must keep striking ourselves and bringing ourselves into subjection; it is not something achieved by doing well once or twice. Then later it comes to be done as habit, and by faith. Serving the Lord, too, does not come out that way from the beginning. I want the Lord to make all of us into such people, and I want Him to make us into such people as can unite and serve the Lord and follow Him until the day the Lord comes. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The heart that is not washed even when the hands are washed

< Mark 7:1-23 >

"Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, 'Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?' He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.' He said to them, 'All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be

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put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban'—' (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.' When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, 'Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!' When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. So He said to them, 'Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?' And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'"

The people who examined clean hands

The Pharisees and the scribes looked at the hands of the disciples. To their eyes, unwashed hands were very plainly visible. Whether one had sprinkled water on oneself after returning from the market, whether the cups, pitchers, and copper vessels had been washed according to the rules, whether the customs kept for generations had been left out—these were

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their important standards of judgment. So, seeing the disciples eating bread, they challenged Jesus. Why, they asked, do Your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders?

Washing hands is not in itself a bad thing. Keeping hands and vessels clean for hygiene is necessary. Jesus was not encouraging the eating of food with dirty hands. The point at issue in this passage is not cleanness of living but purity of heart. The problem arose when washing off the dust outside the body was turned into a righteousness that makes a person clean before God. A habit useful for living, or a community custom, climbed at some point to the same seat as the word of God, and became a standard judging the one who kept it righteous and the one who failed to keep it filthy.

We, too, easily see other people's hands. Manner of speech, dress, attitude in worship, the amount of service, the length of prayers, the length of one's church career—these are visible to the eye. Among them there certainly are things that must be corrected rightly. But when we begin to judge even the heart on the basis of what is visible, we come to stand in the place where the Pharisees stood. More dangerous still is that while examining another's outside, we fail to see our own heart. If we point out someone's small fault while looking down on him inwardly, and, while speaking the name of God, try to prove the fact that our own judgment is right, the clean appearance can become a mask covering a filthy heart.

Jesus was not dragged along by their question into inspecting the disciples' hands first. Rather, He exposed the hearts of the people who were asking. He applied the word of Isaiah, that with their lips they honor God but their heart is far removed from God. Hypocrisy is not simply a matter of the outside and the inside differing a little. It is worship that uses the name of God while actually putting the commandments of men at the center. It is a

faith that says it gives to God but does not follow the word of God. It is the state in which there are pious words on the lips, but the master of the heart is not God but one's own righteousness.

When the word is nullified in the name of serving God

Jesus gave the case of Corban. God's commandment to honor one's father and mother was clear. Yet some people taught as though, once a person declared that what should have gone to benefit his parents had become a thing offered to God, he no longer needed to help his parents. A religious word became a tool for evading God's command. Outwardly it looked like giving more to God, but in reality it nullified the word to honor one's father and mother.

This scene shows when tradition becomes dangerous. Tradition can be a fence that helps us follow the word well. The wisdom left behind by the people of faith who went before is precious too. But no tradition can stand in the seat of judging the word. If, on the ground that we are used to it, we make what the Scriptures do not say into an absolute standard, or, conversely, hide God's clear will behind custom on the ground that it is uncomfortable, tradition becomes a shield protecting not the word but our own selves.

Nor does everything become faith just because the name of faith is attached to it. Worship, prayer, offerings, service, fasting, and relief of the poor are precious things. But if one makes such acts the price that washes one's own sins, one comes to push out the salvation Jesus accomplished. If one thinks that because one wept much, yesterday's sins are gone; that because one served longer, one has gained the qualification to be accepted by God;

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that because one kept a special resolution, one's heart has become pure—then works have stepped into the place of the gospel. God is not One who receives the tally sheet of piety we have made and gives the remission of sins.

This word does not mean to throw away worship and obedience. Rather, it is a word telling us to set upright what the root of obedience is. Serving in order to receive the remission of sins and serving out of thanksgiving for having received the remission of sins are alike in outward form, but the center is different. The former holds out one's own works to God and demands a price, while the latter believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished and offers oneself in thanksgiving for the grace received. Works must be not the condition paying the price of salvation but the fruit borne by the person who has been saved.

Jesus, who moved the seat of the problem to the heart

Jesus called the multitude again. And He told them all to hear. He said that it is not what enters from outside that defiles a man, but what comes out from inside a man that defiles a man. This was a word that overturned the notion of purity of that day from the root. People examined what food one had eaten, with what hands one had eaten, and with whom one had had contact. But Jesus made it plain that the source of defilement lies not in dishes or fingers but in the heart of man.

Looking at the list of evils that come out of the heart, we cannot say of ourselves that we are clean just because we have avoided a few great crimes. Evil thoughts, fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness all come out from

inside a man. It is not only what has been revealed in actual deeds that is sin. The heart that covets what belongs to another, the thought that puts someone down in order to raise oneself, the deceit that hides an unfavorable fact, the gaze that cannot endure another's doing well, and the pride that sets one's own judgment above God also flow out of the same spring of the heart.

We commonly say that we got angry because of our surroundings, that we hated because the other person provoked us, and that we deceived because times were hard. Surroundings can be the occasion for what is inside the heart to come outside. But Jesus did not call the surroundings the source of sin. He said it comes out from inside a man. As what is inside a cup flows out when the cup is shaken, so when events shake us, the covetousness and pride and evil thoughts we have been holding in the heart are revealed. Therefore the expectation that the heart will become clean if only the outward conditions are changed is not sufficient.

By religious training one can press down the expression of evil for a while. One can be careful with one's words before people, hold back anger, and keep set rules. Such self-restraint is necessary for life in community. But pressing down the expression and washing away the sin are different things. Shutting the lid tight does not make the filth inside the vessel disappear. The fact that one has lived more neatly than others also cannot solve the fundamental problem of sin welling up from the heart. However many times you wash your hands, the evil of the heart is not washed with water.

The evils Jesus listed are not the characteristics of a few unrelated people. They cannot be divided up as though one person had only covetousness and another person only pride. In one heart evil thoughts grow, covetousness gives birth to deceit, and pride can show itself as blasphemy and an evil eye. The

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hatred inside the heart does not become clean merely by the fact that one has not yet done the act called murder, nor does the heart that covets another's share become righteous merely by the fact that one has not stolen goods. The list is given not so that we may calculate how many items apply to us, but so that we may see that the whole heart of man is under the influence of sin.

A person easily thinks that, having corrected one revealed sin, his whole heart has become clean. He resolves not to lie, and having spoken honestly for a while, he considers that the problem of deceit is now finished. But even while speaking facts, wickedness that seeks to bring down the other person can be mixed in, and pride that seeks the reputation of an honest person can grow. One can say one has thrown away greed while boasting of one's self-restraint. Sin also hides inside self-righteousness, changing its shape. Therefore the achievement of correcting one act cannot save the heart.

That is not to say that efforts to correct one's living are useless. Admitting one's wrong to the person one has harmed, setting falsehood right, returning what one took out of covetousness, and cutting off the path of repeated sin are proper things to do. Only, those acts cannot remove the judgment for the sins already committed or make the heart righteous. Compensating a loss is a responsibility owed to one's neighbor, while the remission of sins is grace received by believing the salvation God accomplished in Jesus. When we distinguish these two, we come neither to evade responsibility nor to set up our own works as a savior.

The word in which Jesus revealed the source of the heart is not a tool for analyzing others but a mirror reflecting oneself. We keenly find out other people's covetousness and pride while attaching plausible reasons to our own greed. We call another's harsh words wickedness while excusing our own harsh words as

having been zeal for the truth. But before the Lord, changing the name does not change the nature of the sin. Only when we stand quietly before the word and admit our own heart do we at last throw away hypocrisy and seek true salvation.

Admit your fundamental self before the word of God

The Law is not soap that washes our heart; it is like light that reveals sin. That the light shows the dust in the room does not mean the light itself clears away the dust. God's commandments are good and right. When we stand before that word, we come to know that we have not loved God wholly and have not loved our neighbor as our own body. We come to see not only the sins revealed in deeds but even the root of the heart that gave birth to those deeds.

Therefore the first response to make before the Law is not self-defense. Nor is it to compare ourselves with others and say that this much is good enough. We must acknowledge that God's judgment is right. We must accept the fact that I am a person out of whose heart evil things come, that I cannot remove that source with my resolutions and training, and that I am one placed under the judgment of sin. This is not a word telling us to hate ourselves and remain in despair. It is a word telling us to see exactly where the disease is, so that we may find the Savior.

A sick person who refuses the diagnosis cannot receive treatment. The diagnosis of being a sinner is the same. While one insists that one is only a little lacking and essentially good, one cannot know why Jesus had to bear the sin of the world. If one regards one's own sins as only a collection of small mistakes, one comes to think of salvation too as about a small supplement.

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But Jesus is not One who came to fix a few behaviors. He came to deliver us wholly from the sin that wells up inside man and from the judgment that sin brings.

Admitting one's sin and remembering one's daily wrongs so as to condemn oneself are different. True admission is joining one's heart to the word of God. When God says it is sin, we admit it is sin; when He says the wages of sin is death, we accept that judgment too as right; and when God proclaims that He has removed that sin through His Son, we believe that word of salvation together with it. Accepting only the judgment on sin while refusing the declaration of salvation is not humility. Counting the word of God right to the end, above one's own feelings, is faith.

God's way of washing the sins of the heart

To remove all the sins that come out of the heart of man, God Himself opened the way of salvation. Jesus, who is without sin, came clothed in flesh, and, beginning His public life, received baptism from John, the representative of mankind. That baptism does not have the same meaning as the water baptism a believer receives in church. Nor did Jesus receive it in order to wash away His own sin. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon His own body the sins of all mankind—all the sins that come out of the heart of man and come to be committed throughout a whole life.

Jesus, who had taken on the sins, carried those sins and went to the Cross. Since the wages of sin is death, His shedding blood and dying on the Cross was not a mere example of the spirit of sacrifice. Jesus received in our place the judgment and the punishment for our sins, which He had taken on with His

baptism. And He did not remain in death, but actually rose again on the third day. The resurrection is the confirmation that salvation from sin and death has been accomplished wholly, and it is the event that gives the believer new life and the hope of the resurrection to come.

There is no part here to be added by the hands of man. Jesus took on sin with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead, and so accomplished salvation. The person who believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of sins by which all sins—including the fundamental sin and the sins committed by deeds—are removed once and for all. God does not go on calling him a sinner. He makes him a righteous person with no sin in his heart, gives him the Holy Spirit as a gift, and has him live born again as God's child.

The remission of sins received once and for all does not mean that we become perfect people who never once do wrong. Even after receiving the remission of sins, the flesh is weak and can do wrong. There are also times when sin shows itself in thought, word, and deed. That does not mean we should then take sin lightly or persist in it. We must admit the wrong and turn back, and look again in faith to the perfect salvation of the Lord, who took on even that sin and was judged for it. Our confession does not newly complete Jesus' atonement; it makes us honestly admit our own wrong before the salvation already accomplished.

It is not that the heart is maintained only if we produce a new atonement daily, as one washes one's hands over and over. Jesus' salvation is not an unfinished work that must be completed anew each day. Nor does sin decrease in proportion to a person's weeping and resolving. The remission of sins is received by believing what Jesus accomplished once and for all. And precisely this fact does not make the person who has received

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the remission of sins dissolute; it leads him to thanksgiving and reverence. If we know the grace of the Lord, who took on even my wrongs of today, we cannot delight in sin. Rather, knowing how heavy a judgment sin demanded, we hate sin and seek the way of righteousness.

From a life of trying to look clean to a life of believing the gospel that has made us clean

We stand before two ways. One is the way of continually polishing the outside in order to look clean to other people. On this way, comparison is always needed. One must gather evidence that one has prayed longer than someone, given more, and lived more strictly. But even when one feels for a moment ahead in the comparison, the heart is not at peace. When a better person appears, one is shaken, and when the sin one has hidden is revealed, one collapses. A vessel made of one's own righteousness breaks at even a small shock.

The other is the way of admitting one's own heart before the word of God and believing the salvation Jesus completed. On this way there is no need to pretend to be clean. There is no reason to hide sin and no cause to inflate one's own deeds. For the ground on which I was made righteous is not my report card but what Jesus accomplished. When we have seen the filth of our heart, instead of sinking down in despair, we can look to the Savior who already took on that sin and was judged for it.

The righteous person who has received the remission of sins does not disregard the outward life. Rather, because God saved him freely, he seeks to obey the word. He honors his parents, helps his neighbor, speaks honestly, keeps his body and his living orderly, serves the church, and preaches the gospel. But

he does not make of these the qualification for salvation. Good deeds and service and obedience are not the price of the remission of sins but the fruit borne by the life he has received. When the fruit is lacking, he does not try to supplement salvation by piling up more merits of his own; he returns to the gospel, seeks the help of the Holy Spirit, and corrects the actual wrong.

The way one looks at other people also changes. The person who leans on his own righteousness finds out others' unwashed hands. The person who has received the remission of sins by grace knows that he himself was saved from the same sins of the heart, and so does not rashly despise a brother's weakness. He does not say a wrong is not sin, but neither does he make of condemning people a material for exalting himself. He exhorts within the truth, hopes for restoration, and remembers that he himself can also fall.

Dear saints, today Jesus moves our gaze from the hands to the heart. He makes the eyes that used to inspect other people's hands look at our own heart. And He does not send us, who have discovered the filth of the heart, off to human regulations or endless self-purification, but calls us before the gospel He completed. Do not nullify the word of God with the commandments of men. Do not try to wash away sin with repeated religious acts. Do not hold out good deeds as the price of salvation.

Acknowledge the word of God as it is. The word that evil comes out of the heart of man is right; the judgment of sin is right; and the gospel that Jesus took on all our sins, was judged, and rose again is also right. Believe this completed salvation with your heart. The dust on your hands can be washed with water, but the sin of the heart is washed only by believing the gospel Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who

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believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a righteous person whose sins have all been removed once and for all. Therefore we must no longer pretend to be clean, but live thanking the grace that has made us clean. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

“Yes, Lord”—the faith that joins the heart to the word

< Mark 7:24-30 >

“From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, ‘Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.’ And she answered and said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.’ Then He said to her, ‘For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.’ And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.”

The report of Jesus that could not be hidden

Jesus entered a house in the region of Tyre. He meant to stay without anyone knowing, but He could not be hidden. The report that He was there spread, and a woman heard that report. That woman had a young daughter with an unclean spirit. The passage does not say how long she had suffered or what methods she had tried first. What we know is one thing: the fact that when the

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woman heard the report of Jesus, she came at once and fell down at His feet.

Before a desperate problem, a person meets the limit of his own strength. Ordinarily we think we can handle many things with plans and experience. But when we meet something like the suffering of a beloved child—something we can neither shoulder in the child's place nor end by our own command—our helplessness becomes plain. This woman loved her daughter, but with love alone she could not send the demon out. However earnest her heart, it could not produce the result. So she came not to prove her own ability but to plead with Jesus, who has authority.

The passage identifies her as a Greek, of the Syro-Phoenician people. She was not a Jew. She could put forward neither the standing nor the lineage of God's covenant people. She had no certificate of qualification to present before Jesus. Yet even having only heard the report, she did not stay far off. She did not give up on account of her position, but came forward to the feet of Jesus. True faith is not the boldness that comes out of thinking oneself qualified. It is the boldness that comes forward because one believes that, though I have nothing to put forward, the Lord has authority and compassion.

The report of Jesus has been handed down to us today as the written word. We cannot go and find that house in Tyre, but through the Scriptures we hear who He is and what He has done. If it ends with hearing, the report stays at the level of information. The woman, after hearing, went to Jesus. We too, when we hear the word, must not merely weigh it inside our own thoughts, but lay down our heart before the Lord. We must come forward before Him carrying the problem of sin we cannot solve, the weakness we want to hide, and our pleading for the people we love.

The plea made falling down at His feet

The woman fell down at the feet of Jesus. The falling down was not merely a posture of the body. It was an act revealing the fact that Jesus is the Master and that she was one seeking grace. She did not make Jesus a tool to be moved according to her own will. She did not command, and she did not present the terms of a bargain. She begged Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

Begging is not a sign that faith is weak. Rather, it is the act of the faith that knows in whom the authority lies. The person who thinks he can solve it himself does not beg. The one who knows that the Lord can do it, and who knows that nothing but the Lord's grace will do, falls down. This woman saw not only her own helplessness; she saw also the power of Jesus. Despair sees its own helplessness and fails to see the Lord's authority, but faith, while admitting its own helplessness, takes hold of the Lord's authority.

In our prayers, too, these two elements must be together. We must not exaggerate ourselves, but honestly admit our helplessness. At the same time, we must not make God as small as our own circumstances. The Lord's authority does not shrink because the problem is old. That I have not found the answer does not mean the Lord does not know the way either. Faith is not an optimism that denies the situation, but entrusting oneself to the Lord, who is greater than the situation.

But Jesus' first word was not the immediate answer the woman had expected. He said that the children must first be filled, and that it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. This word was a hard word for the woman. It revealed that there is an order that puts the children first, and that she was not in a position to claim that right. Here it appears what kind of faith the woman's faith is.

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The ‘Yes’ that did not cut the word away

The woman did not deny Jesus’ word. Nor did she try to amend the Lord’s word, asking Him to consider her own situation first. Her answer was clear: *“Yes, Lord, yet.”* In this short response there is an important order of faith. First she called the Lord ‘Lord,’ and she acknowledged that the Lord’s word was right. She put the Lord’s judgment ahead of her own feelings and her own face.

We often accept the gracious promises readily while pushing away the words that lower us. We hold on to the word that God loves us, but feel uncomfortable at the word that evil comes out of the heart of man. We want salvation yet refuse the diagnosis that we are sinners; we hope for the Lord’s help yet cannot endure the collapse of our own righteousness. But if we accept the word of God selectively, what we believe in is, in the end, not God but our own thinking.

The woman’s ‘Yes’ is not a word abusing herself as a being of no worth. Nor is it a lesson that one must stay still even when insulted by people. The passage does not justify the strong pressing down the weak. Before the word of Jesus, she stood not as a person holding the right to demand, but as one in need of grace. Forcing another person to endure violence and laying down one’s own righteousness before God are entirely different things.

To be lowered before God is to acknowledge fact as fact. It is to acknowledge that I, a creature, am not higher than the Creator; that I, who have sinned, cannot become my own savior; and that when God speaks, His judgment is more right than my judgment. Humility is not an attitude that invents evils one does not have or denies the gifts God has given. It is the heart that does not switch its own place with God’s place.

This woman did not turn away on the ground that she had been wounded by the word. Nor did she seize one sentence of the Lord and use it as a weapon to refute the Lord. She joined her heart to the whole of the word. While acknowledging the order that the children must first eat their fill, she discovered within that word the Lord's abundance. What followed after her 'Yes' was not defiance of the word but a plea grounded on the word.

The Lord's abundance revealed even in the crumbs

The woman said that even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs the children were eating. She did not ask Him to take away the children's bread and give it to her. She did not demand to be put before the children. And yet she believed that at the Lord's table there was grace that would reach her and her daughter. As there are crumbs that fall even when the children have eaten their fill, so she believed that the Lord's authority and compassion would not run short even after solving her daughter's suffering.

The words asking for crumbs must not be misunderstood as small faith. The woman was not asking for some small power of Jesus. Because she believed how abundant Jesus' authority is, she could say that even the crumbs were enough. She did not think the Lord's grace a limited portion that grows less for one person when it goes to another. She believed that the Lord who feeds the children to the full could show compassion also to the one under the table.

Faith does not lie in loudly asserting one's rights before God. Nor does it lie in persuading Him that one deserves special

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treatment. It lies in believing the Lord's character and authority. If I think the Lord moves because my earnestness is great, the ground of prayer comes to lie in me. But when I say that I ask—though I can put nothing forward—because the Lord is compassionate and has power, the ground of prayer lies in the Lord.

Our remission of sins, too, is received within the same order of grace. Man has no right to demand salvation from God on the strength of his good deeds and religious career. Nor has he the ability to remove by himself the sins that come out of the heart. But God did not leave sinners as they were. Jesus, with the baptism He received from John, took on all the sins that were our portion; because of those sins He was judged on the Cross and died; and then He rose from the dead and accomplished perfect salvation. This work is not an incomplete salvation that man must supplement by paying a price.

To the person who admits his sin and helplessness and receives that completed salvation by believing, God gives the once-for-all remission of sins by which all sins are removed. That person receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, is born again, and becomes God's child. This is not a prize obtained as the payment for rating oneself low. Nor does the act called humility pay the price of salvation in one's stead. It is grace received only by believing what Jesus accomplished. The lowered heart does not hold out its own merits, but receives that grace as it is.

Jesus, who acknowledged the woman's words

Jesus told the woman to go her way, for she had said this word. He declared that the demon had gone out of her daughter. The Lord heard the woman's words. In those words there were

together the confession acknowledging Jesus as Lord, the submission accepting the Lord's judgment as right, and the trust believing in the Lord's abundant compassion. Jesus did not marvel at a way with words; He received the faith that appeared in those words.

Words come out of the heart. A person can imitate humble expressions in order to turn a situation to his advantage. But Jesus is not deceived by the form of the lips. The woman's answer was not servile flattery. She acknowledged the Lord's word, yet she did not give up on the Lord. Lowliness and boldness were together in her. She was not bold about her own righteousness, but she was bold about the Lord's compassion.

We too must learn this heart as we pray. Do not calculate merits before God. Do not demand that He must of course grant it because you have served this much. Do not hold out a comparison chart showing that you are better than others. Yet do not draw back either, saying that because I am lacking, the Lord cannot help me either. Admitting one's own lack and doubting the Lord's grace are not the same thing. True humility lowers oneself but does not lower God as well.

The Lord's answer was also different from the way the woman had expected. Jesus did not go to the house together with the woman on the spot. Nor did He perform any special ceremony before her eyes. He only said that the demon had gone out of her daughter. The woman received that word and went back. It was before she had reached home and before she had confirmed the result with her eyes, but she moved her steps relying on the Lord's declaration.

Faith does not always demand the proof before its eyes first. Because the Lord has spoken, it moves leaning on that word. Our feelings change several times even in a day. Circumstances too can soon become different. But the word of the Lord does not

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become true and then false according to our mood. What the woman felt on the road home, the passage does not say. What matters is the fact that she received the Lord's word and went back.

The authority of the word confirmed at home

When the woman returned home, the child was lying on the bed, and the demon had gone out. Jesus' authority was not limited by distance. Even though Jesus did not enter that house in person, it was fulfilled exactly as He had spoken. It was not the woman's faith that drove out the demon; it was Jesus' authority that set her daughter free. Faith is not a force that produces the Lord's power, but the heart that relies on the Lord, who already has the authority.

This fact keeps our prayer from being made into a magic formula. It is not that speaking a particular sentence exactly brings the desired result automatically. Nor is there power in the expression 'Yes' itself. The power is with Jesus. The woman's response was a confession of faith that rightly acknowledged who it is that holds that authority. Therefore, rather than making out of this passage a way of speaking that obtains what we want, we must learn the faith that joins the heart to the Lord.

Neither must we indiscriminately identify every disease or suffering with demons. This passage says plainly that the daughter had an unclean spirit, and it is an event in which Jesus declared that the demon had gone out. If on this basis we conclude that the cause of every affliction is of the same kind, we come to add what the passage does not say. The center we must hold on to is not an attitude of hastily judging the person who suffers, but the fact that no authority prevails over the word

of Jesus.

What the woman saw at home was the proof that the Lord's word was not an empty promise. Between the road walked believing the word and the moment of confirming the result, there was time. We too have such times. Everything may not change the moment we have prayed. At such times, rather than hurrying to a conclusion by our own thinking, we must rely on the Lord's goodness. Only, we must not turn this event into a formula that every prayer is invariably fulfilled at the hour and in the way we have set. The Lord is the Sovereign, and we trust His wisdom and compassion.

As for the remission of sins, we can hold clearly on to the promise of the gospel the Lord completed. The fact that all the sins of the person who believes in Jesus—who took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again—have been removed once and for all is not something confirmed by mood. It is not that on a day the heart burns hot one becomes a righteous person, and on a downcast day one becomes a sinner again. We believe the remission of sins on the ground of what God has done and the promise He has spoken. As the woman relied on the Lord's word as she went home, we set our heart on the word of the completed gospel.

The fruit of serving that the lowered heart bears

The Syro-Phoenician woman's lowering of herself is not a merit for receiving the remission of sins. But in the life of the person who has received grace, the fruit of lowliness must appear. Salvation is received only by believing what Jesus accomplished. After that, obedience, service, and endurance are

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borne as the fruits of faith. If the order is reversed, service becomes the price of salvation and a burden pressing people down. Conversely, if we say that having been saved by grace we may live any way we please, we erase the fruit the gospel bears.

When a person who has received the remission of sins counts himself higher than others inside the Church, his heart soon becomes uncomfortable. The thoughts pile up: why do they not recognize my ability; why do they entrust it to that person and not entrust it to me; why do I not receive the treatment I expected? Such comparison makes serving not a joy but a stage for proving one's own worth. He counts as trifling the small work the Lord has given, and when he is not recognized, he tries to lay down the work he was given.

But the person who lives by the Lord's compassion does not despise small serving. For he knows that the place he has received is grace. He respects the gifts of the other brothers and sisters as well. It is not only the person skilled in speech who is precious, nor only the person entrusted with conspicuous work who is important. Quietly keeping one's place, doing one's assigned work faithfully, and building up other people are also precious. When the different members serve the Lord each in his own place, the community can preach the gospel together.

Humility is not a passivity that puts forward no opinion at all. One can speak when one must speak for the truth, and set right what must be set right. Only, one does not dress up the keeping of one's own pride as the will of God. One does not tear down the community in order to prove that one is right. One lets one's own thoughts also be judged before the word, and seeks that through one's assigned work not oneself but the Lord may be revealed.

The woman's gaze was directed not at her own face but at her suffering daughter. She did not linger over weighing the

insult, but took hold of the Lord's compassion that could save her daughter. We too, when we serve, must examine whose benefit we are seeking. If we serve in order to be praised, we grow weary when there is no praise. If we work in order to exalt the name of an office, another person's growth comes to feel like a threat. But the person who, with the grace received from the Lord, seeks the life of his neighbor and the benefit of the church bears even the work that goes unseen with thanksgiving.

Hold the Lord's word and the Lord's compassion together

Dear saints, the woman did not leave the Lord before a hard word. Nor did she cut the word to fit her own wishes. With 'Yes, Lord' she joined her heart to the Lord's judgment, and at the same time she believed that even in the crumbs falling under the table there was the Lord's abundant compassion. She knew that she had no right, but she did not think that the Lord had no grace.

When we come forward before God, we need this faith. To the word that calls sin 'sin', say, 'Yes.' Join your heart also to the word that no one can be saved by human righteousness. And to the gospel that Jesus took charge of sin with the baptism He received from John, was judged and died on the Cross, and removed all sins by His resurrection, respond also with 'Yes.' Do not stop at admitting your helplessness; believe the perfect salvation of the Lord, who gives life to sinners.

When your circumstances are stifling, do not think the Lord's authority small. Even when the answer does not come in the shape you expected, do not throw away the word. Before you confirm it with your eyes, believe who the Lord is, and walk. And do not use this passage to tell other people to endure unjust

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insult and abuse. This word is not a club for beating down the weak but an invitation for every person to lay down his own righteousness before God and look to His compassion.

The Lord set free even the daughter who was far away, by His word. That One who has authority is our Savior. We come forward to His feet without putting forward merits. We acknowledge that the Lord's word is right, and we believe that the Lord's compassion is sufficient. And we do not try to repay the grace we have received as the price of salvation, but serve our neighbors with a lowly heart and bear the fruit of faith. The confession *"Yes, Lord"* must not stay on the lips alone; it must lead on to the steps that go back believing the word and to a life faithful in one's assigned place. ✉

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CHAPTER

8

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Mark Chapter 8

< Mark 8:1-38 >

“In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, ‘I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.’ Then His disciples answered Him, ‘How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?’ He asked them, ‘How many loaves do you have?’ And they said, ‘Seven.’ So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them. So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha. Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, ‘Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.’ And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side. Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat.

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Then He charged them, saying, 'Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we have no bread.' But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?' They said to Him, 'Twelve.' 'Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He said to them, 'How is it you do not understand?' Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, 'I see men like trees, walking.' Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. Then He sent him away to his house, saying, 'Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.' Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, 'Who do men say that I am?' So they answered, 'John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said to Him, 'You are the Christ.' Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him. And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes,

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and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.' When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, 'Whoever 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 and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit 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 whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.'"

1) Summary of the entire content

Mark chapter 8 begins with the event in which Jesus fed four thousand people with seven loaves and a few small fish, and records how He rebuked the Pharisees who demanded a sign and taught His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. The disciples misunderstood Jesus' words as being about a matter of food, and Jesus made them remember the events of feeding the five thousand and the four thousand and pointed out their unperceiving hearts. Then, after healing a blind man at Bethsaida in two stages, He asked His disciples on the way to Caesarea Philippi about His own identity. Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, but when Jesus

said that He would suffer, be killed, and rise again, Peter tried to stop Him. Jesus rebuked Peter for not being mindful of the things of God but of the things of men. Finally, He taught that whoever would follow Jesus must deny himself and take up his own cross, and that even if one gains the whole world, it is of no profit if he loses his own life. This chapter shows that we must go beyond confessing with the mouth who Jesus is, and rightly understand and follow the Christ who works through suffering, the Cross, and the resurrection.

1. Jesus, who had compassion on the hungry multitude (verses 1–3)

A great multitude was with Jesus again, and they had nothing to eat. Jesus called His disciples and said that He had compassion on the multitude. For the people had now been with Jesus three days and had nothing to eat.

Jesus also knew that if He sent the multitude home hungry, they might collapse on the way. Among them were people who had come from afar. Jesus' compassion was a love that looked attentively not only at people's spiritual needs but even at their physical hunger and the distance they had to travel.

Jesus knew the people's suffering, but He did not leave His disciples out of the ministry. He called the disciples to see the multitude's need together with Him, and had them learn how He would meet that need.

The disciples had experienced the earlier event of the feeding of the five thousand, but when a new situation arrived, they again thought first of the practical impossibility. Having experienced grace once does not mean one automatically has faith in every situation. We must remember the grace of God we experienced in the past and apply it again by faith before the problem of the present.

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2. Feeding the four thousand with seven loaves (verses 4–10)

The disciples asked how anyone could satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness. When Jesus asked them how many loaves they had, the disciples answered that they had seven.

Jesus commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. Then He took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His disciples. The disciples distributed to the multitude the bread they had received from Jesus.

There were also a few small fish, and Jesus blessed them as well and had them distributed to the people. Everyone ate and was filled, and when they gathered the leftover fragments, they came to seven baskets. Those who ate the food were about four thousand.

This event is similar to the feeding of the five thousand in Mark chapter 6, but it is a separate event. When He fed the five thousand there were five loaves and two fish and twelve baskets were left over, but this time there were seven loaves and a few small fish, and seven baskets were left over. Jesus later referred to the two events separately.

The food the disciples had was not enough to feed the great multitude, but when it was placed in Jesus' hands, it fed everyone to the full. The source of the supply was not the disciples' ability or preparation but Jesus. Yet Jesus delivered the food to the people through His disciples.

After feeding the multitude, Jesus sent them away, got into the boat with His disciples, and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

3. The Pharisees who demanded a sign from heaven (verses 11–13)

The Pharisees came out to Jesus, began to dispute with Him,

and demanded a sign from heaven to test Him. They already knew of, or could have encountered, the events in which Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, and fed many people.

That they nevertheless demanded yet another sign was not an honest request made in order to know and believe the truth. It was a demand made to test Jesus and to find a pretext for not acknowledging Him. A person with no heart to believe can keep demanding new evidence no matter how much evidence he sees.

Jesus sighed deeply in His spirit and said, why does this generation seek a sign? And after declaring that no sign would be given to this generation, He left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side.

This does not mean that Jesus performed no signs at all. It means that though He had already shown sufficient words and works, He did not respond to a sign demanded in order to test Him while refusing to believe.

Faith is not testing God according to one's own demands, or setting the condition that one will believe only if the desired miracle appears. It is humbly accepting the word and the evidence God has already given.

4. The word to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod (verses 14–15)

The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, and there was only one loaf in the boat. At that moment Jesus commanded them to take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.

Even a small amount of leaven spreads through the whole lump of dough and affects it. Through the figure of leaven, Jesus warned that the wrong thinking and attitudes shown in the Pharisees and in Herod could also enter and spread in the

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disciples' hearts.

The Pharisees saw many words and miracles and yet did not believe in Jesus but kept testing Him. Behind their outward piety and religious zeal lay obstinate unbelief and self-righteousness. Herod knew that the words of John the Baptist were right, yet did not follow the truth because of his desires, his concern for saving face, and his political interests.

The leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod refers to human thinking and self-will mixed into the word of God, and to worldly and corrupt teaching. Such leaven may look small at first, but once it enters a person's heart, it clouds faith and affects his whole thinking and life. Therefore a disciple must beware of thoughts and teachings that differ from the word of God, and stand firm on the pure word of the gospel.

Wrong teachings and attitudes look small at first, but once received into the heart, they can affect one's whole thinking and life. Therefore a disciple must be careful what he hears and whose values he accepts.

5. The disciples who misunderstood it as a matter of bread, and the heart that does not perceive (verses 16–21)

When Jesus spoke of leaven, the disciples reasoned among themselves that He had said it because they had no bread. Jesus was warning of a spiritual danger, but the disciples thought only of the food problem before their eyes.

Jesus asked why they were reasoning about having no bread, and rebuked them, asking whether they still did not perceive or understand. He asked whether their heart had grown dull, whether having eyes they did not see and having ears they did not hear.

Jesus asked how many baskets of fragments were left over when He distributed the five loaves to the five thousand, and

the disciples answered twelve baskets. When He distributed the seven loaves to the four thousand, they answered that seven baskets were left.

The disciples remembered the numbers and results of the events, but they had not sufficiently perceived the power and identity of Jesus that those events revealed. If Jesus had twice fed so many people, the fact that there was only one loaf in the boat could not be a decisive problem for them.

Experiencing miracles or remembering the contents of the Scriptures is different from perceiving their meaning. The disciples were continually learning who Jesus was, but they still thought first of their visible circumstances.

In faith, we must not leave the grace received in the past as a mere memory, but make it the ground for believing God's faithfulness before the problems of the present.

6. Healing the blind man of Bethsaida in two stages (verses 22–26)

When Jesus and His disciples arrived at Bethsaida, people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. Jesus took the man by the hand and led him out of the town.

Jesus spit on his eyes, laid His hands on him, and asked if he saw anything. The man answered that he saw people, but that they looked like trees walking. His sight had begun to be restored, but he could not yet see things distinctly.

When Jesus put His hands on his eyes again, he looked intently, and he was completely restored and came to see everything clearly. Jesus sent him to his house and told him not to go into the town.

It was not that two stages were needed because Jesus could not heal him at once. Elsewhere Jesus healed the sick immediately with only a word. This event is a special case in

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which Jesus restored sight gradually, with a purpose.

In the context of the Gospel of Mark, this event can be considered in connection with the disciples' gradual coming to understanding. The disciples watched Jesus and followed Him, but they did not yet see clearly His identity and the way of the Cross. Peter soon confesses Jesus as the Christ, but cannot accept the fact that the Christ must suffer and die.

The passage does not directly explain the blind man's two-stage healing as a parable of the disciples' spiritual state. But the placement of this event makes us think of the state of the disciples, who had begun to see in part but had not yet come to perceive completely.

7. Peter's confession, "*You are the Christ*" (verses 27–30).

On the way to the towns of Caesarea Philippi with His disciples, Jesus asked who people said He was. The disciples answered that people called Jesus John the Baptist, or Elijah, or one of the prophets.

People acknowledged Jesus as a being greater than an ordinary man, but they did not know that He is the Son of God and the promised Christ. They thought of Jesus as an outstanding prophet or as a great figure of the past appearing again.

Jesus asked His disciples, *"Who do you say that I am?"* Knowing other people's opinions was not enough. What mattered was who the disciples themselves believed Jesus to be.

Peter answered, *"You are the Christ."* *"Christ"* means the One anointed by God, who came as the promised Savior and King. Peter confessed that Jesus was not a mere prophet but the Christ sent by God.

Jesus strictly warned His disciples to tell no one this fact about Him. In those days people often expected the Christ to be

a political king who would liberate Israel from Roman rule. The disciples, too, did not yet sufficiently understand the mission of the Christ, so Jesus' identity could have been spread abroad amid wrong expectations.

8. Jesus, who spoke of His suffering, death, and resurrection (verse 31)

After Peter's confession, Jesus began to teach that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, be killed, and rise again after three days.

Jesus said that His death was not an accidental mishap or the failure of a plan but something that had to be fulfilled. The way of the Christ included not only worldly glory but suffering, rejection, and death.

Jesus did not speak only of suffering and death; He also said plainly that He would rise again after three days. The Cross does not end in defeat, and through the resurrection Jesus' victory and identity would be revealed.

Peter rightly confessed Jesus as the Christ, but he did not understand in what way the Christ works. Using the right title is not enough; we must also accept how Jesus explains His own mission.

9. Peter, who tried to stop Jesus, and the rebuke of Satan (verses 32–33)

When Jesus spoke openly of His suffering and death, Peter took hold of Jesus and began to stop Him. Peter may have had a heart that loved Jesus and wanted to protect Him, but he could not accept the will of God, that the Christ must go the way of the Cross.

Jesus looked at His disciples and rebuked Peter, saying,

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"Get behind Me, Satan!" This does not mean that Peter himself was Satan, but that by insisting on a way of the Christ without the Cross, he was playing a role like the temptation of Satan.

Satan tried to keep Jesus from going to the Cross according to the will of God. Peter tried to make Jesus avoid suffering with words that seemed well-intentioned, but as a result he spoke words that stood in the way of God's plan of salvation.

Jesus pointed out that Peter was not mindful of the things of God but of the things of men. Man thinks first of comfort and success and worldly glory, but God's plan of salvation was accomplished through Jesus' sacrifice and obedience.

Even a thought that seems well-intentioned is not right if it differs from the word of God. A disciple must not try to change Jesus' way with his own thinking, but follow the way Jesus has spoken.

10. The disciple's way of denying himself and taking up his own cross (verse 34)

Jesus called the multitude and His disciples and said that whoever would come after Him must deny himself and take up his own cross and follow Him.

To deny oneself is not to regard oneself as worthless or to erase one's personality and individuality. It is not making one's own thoughts and desires the final standard of life, but entrusting oneself to the words and the will of Jesus.

In those days the cross was not an ornament or a religious symbol but an instrument of punishment that meant shame, pain, and death. To take up one's own cross means to bear loss, opposition, and suffering in order to follow Jesus, and to entrust one's life to God.

One's own cross does not mean enduring every disease or

misfortune unconditionally as if it were fate. In particular, another person's violence and abuse must not be justified as a cross of faith. The cross Jesus spoke of relates to the sacrifice and obedience one bears because one follows Him and the gospel.

Jesus went the way of the Cross first and told His disciples to follow after Him. The disciple's sacrifice is not a sacrifice made to become a savior, but the response of faith that follows Jesus, who saved him.

11. The one who tries to save his life and the one who loses it (verses 35–37)

Jesus said that whoever desires to save his own life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for Jesus and the gospel will save it.

If a person makes only his own safety and profit the highest purpose of his life, he may fail to follow Jesus. While avoiding immediate loss and keeping the things of the world, he can lose the everlasting life God gives.

On the contrary, the person who gives up his time, possessions, honor, and life for Jesus and the gospel may seem to lose in the world, but he gains true life in God.

Jesus asked what profit it would be to a man to gain the whole world and lose his own life. Even if one gains all the wealth, honor, and power of the world, there is no ultimate profit if one cannot escape death and the judgment of God.

A person's life cannot be exchanged for anything in the world. A lost soul cannot be bought back with money or good deeds or position, so above all we must treasure our relationship with God and everlasting life.

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12. We must not be ashamed of Jesus and His words (verse 38)

Jesus said that whoever is ashamed of Him and His words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

For fear of the judgment and mockery of those around him, a person can hide the fact that he believes in Jesus or count His words shameful. When the values of the world collide with the words of Jesus, one can even give up the word in order to gain people's approval.

But the present world is not all there is. Jesus is the Son of Man who would suffer and be killed, but He is also the Judge who will come again in the glory of the Father. Though Jesus seems rejected now, in the end His words and authority will be revealed before all people.

The person who follows Jesus must count the appraisal of Jesus, who will come again, more important than the appraisal of people. Faith is not a thought hidden only in one's heart; it appears as the attitude that acknowledges Jesus and His words in one's life and speech.

The core meaning of Mark chapter 8

First, Jesus had compassion on the hunger of the multitude that had been with Him three days, and fed four thousand people to the full with seven loaves and a few small fish.

Second, the Pharisees, while refusing to accept the word and the power already revealed, demanded yet another sign in order to test Jesus.

Third, the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod warns that obstinate unbelief and self-centered thinking can affect a person's whole heart and life, as a little leaven spreads through

the whole lump of dough.

Fourth, the disciples remembered the miracles of feeding the five thousand and the four thousand and yet did not perceive their meaning, and Jesus pointed out their dull hearts.

Fifth, the event in which the blind man of Bethsaida gradually recovered his sight makes us think of the state of the disciples, who watched Jesus and yet understood His identity and mission only in part.

Sixth, Peter rightly confessed Jesus as the Christ, but could not accept the fact that the Christ must suffer, die, and rise again.

Seventh, Jesus rebuked Peter, who insisted on glory without the Cross, and taught that we must follow God's plan of salvation rather than man's thinking.

Eighth, the disciple who follows Jesus must deny himself and take up his own cross, and treasure Jesus and the gospel more than his own safety and profit.

Ninth, since there is no profit in gaining the whole world if one loses one's own life, everlasting life is more important than any possession or success of the world.

Tenth, Jesus is the Christ who would suffer and be killed, and at the same time the Son of God who rose again and will come again in the glory of the Father; therefore the disciple must not be ashamed of Him and His words.

To sum up in one sentence, Mark chapter 8 is the chapter in which Jesus, after revealing His compassion and power by feeding the hungry multitude amply, warns against the unbelief that sees signs and yet does not perceive, makes plain that He is the Christ who will accomplish salvation through suffering, the Cross, and the resurrection, and teaches His disciples to deny themselves, take up their own crosses, and follow Him to the end.

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2) Mark chapter 8 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Mark chapter 8 shows that Jesus is not only the One who supplies fleshly bread abundantly, but the Bread of life who gives sinners everlasting life. The work of salvation greater and more important than the miracle of feeding the four thousand is that Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again. But the Pharisees did not believe the word and the evidence of salvation already given and demanded only visible signs, and the disciples, too, thought only of fleshly bread while Jesus was speaking of the leaven of wrong teaching. The event in which the blind man of Bethsaida gradually recovered his sight makes us think of the process by which a person who knew Jesus' identity and saving work only dimly comes to perceive it clearly through the word. Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ but could not accept His suffering, death, and resurrection. Jesus taught us to deny man's thinking and believe God's plan of salvation, and, after being saved, to take up our own cross for the gospel and for souls and follow Him.

1. The Lord of life, who fed the four thousand to the full (verses 1–10)

The great multitude had been with Jesus three days, but they had nothing to eat. Jesus was concerned that they would collapse on the way if they went back hungry, and He had compassion on the multitude. Jesus' compassion was a love that looked not only at people's spiritual problems but even at the hunger and weakness of the body.

What the disciples had was only seven loaves and a few

small fish. It was far too little to feed four thousand people, but when Jesus blessed it and distributed it through the disciples, everyone ate to the full and seven baskets were left over.

This event shows that Jesus is God, holding the power of the Creator. At the same time it makes us think that Jesus is the Bread of life who gives everlasting life to all mankind. Fleshly bread leaves one hungry again after eating, but the food of salvation Jesus gives saves the sinner from sin and judgment and lets him obtain everlasting life.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a scanty provision for a particular nation or for only some people. Because Jesus took on the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and was judged on the Cross, this food of salvation is sufficient for anyone to believe and receive the remission of sins.

The disciples were not the people who produced the bread; they were the people who delivered to the multitude the bread they received from Jesus. In the same way, the person who preaches the gospel must not invent a new way of salvation, but distribute to people the word of salvation Jesus has already completed.

2. The work of salvation greater than a sign from heaven (verses 11–13)

The Pharisees demanded a sign from heaven in order to test Jesus. They could already have seen or heard how Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, and fed many people. That they nevertheless demanded yet another sign was not an honest question asked in order to believe, but a test to find a pretext for not believing.

Jesus saw their obstinacy and sighed deeply in His spirit. A person with no heart to believe demands only greater and

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newer signs no matter how many miracles he sees. Seeing a miracle with the eyes does not in itself give the remission of sins or cause a person to be born again.

The greatest work Jesus accomplished on this earth was not displaying material miracles before people's eyes but giving His own body to save sinners. Jesus took on all the sins of mankind onto His own body with the baptism He received from John, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again after three days.

Jesus' resurrection shows that His Cross was not failure or defeat and that the salvation of sinners has been completed. The Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and fundamentally God the Creator. Therefore a person must not set up the miracles he wants as a condition, but believe the salvation God has already accomplished and testified to by the word.

3. We must beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod (verses 14–15)

Jesus told His disciples to take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. Even a small amount of leaven, once it enters the dough, spreads through the whole and affects it.

The Pharisees looked outwardly devout and zealous for the Law, but they put their self-righteousness and religious tradition ahead of the word of God. Even seeing Jesus' words and miracles, they did not believe but kept testing Him.

Herod knew that the words of John the Baptist were right, yet did not follow the truth because of his own desires, his concern for saving face, and his political interests. He counted his position and people's appraisal more important than the word.

The leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod refers to human thinking and self-will mixed into the word of God, and to worldly and corrupt teaching. Such leaven may look small at first, but once received into the heart, it clouds faith and affects one's whole thinking and life.

Neither must man's thinking be mixed into the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must not add human philosophy or religious merit because the gospel looks too simple, nor weaken the word that Jesus removed all sins by fitting it to human experience and feeling. Salvation is received by hearing and believing the pure word of God as it is.

4. The dull heart of the disciples, who thought only of fleshly bread (verses 16–21)

When Jesus spoke of leaven, the disciples thought He had said it because they had no bread. Jesus was warning of wrong thinking and teaching, but the disciples thought only of the food problem before their eyes.

Jesus made them remember that when He distributed five loaves to the five thousand, twelve baskets were left over, and when He distributed seven loaves to the four thousand, seven baskets were left over. The disciples remembered the events and the numbers, but they had not sufficiently perceived the identity and the will of Jesus that those events revealed.

A person can remember the events and doctrines of the Scriptures as knowledge and yet fail to perceive what that word has to do with his own salvation. He can know Jesus only as One who solves the diseases of the body and the problems of living, and miss the fact that He is the Bread of life who removes sin.

To eat the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit is not an act of eating physical food; it is believing with the heart

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what Jesus accomplished for sinners. Jesus' body signifies the sacrifice He gave for sinners, and His blood the death by which He received the judgment of sin.

A disciple must not look only at visible circumstances but remember the grace of salvation Jesus has already bestowed. Looking at one's own lacking deeds and feelings, one may still feel like a sinner, but one must make the word that Jesus took on all sins and was judged for them the ground of faith.

5. The blind man of Bethsaida and the faith whose spiritual eyes are opened (verses 22–26)

People brought a blind man of Bethsaida to Jesus. Jesus took him by the hand, led him outside the town, and touched his eyes. At first he saw people looking like trees walking, but when Jesus touched him again, he came to see everything distinctly.

This event is a miracle in which Jesus restored the sight of a man who really could not see. A disability of the body must not be interpreted as a mark of sin or lack of faith. Jesus did not condemn the man; He took his hand, led him, and made him see completely.

Applied to the gospel, a person may say he believes in Jesus and yet know only dimly how He removed sin. If one knows only the blood of the Cross and does not know why Jesus took on all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, it is hard to call that a faith that sees the process of salvation clearly.

The person whose spiritual eyes are opened perceives that all his sins passed on to Jesus, and that Jesus carried those sins, was judged on the Cross, and rose again. When he knows and believes that this salvation was accomplished for him, his relationship with God becomes clear, and he lives with the

faith that has received the remission of sins.

At first one may understand the truth of salvation only in part. But one must not settle the matter halfway with one's own thinking; one must keep hearing and confirming the word of the Scriptures. When one comes to see clearly through the word the salvation Jesus accomplished, the problem of sin in the heart is solved.

6. The faith that knows and confesses Christ rightly (verses 27–30)

Jesus asked His disciples who people said He was. People thought of Jesus as John the Baptist, or Elijah, or one of the prophets. They acknowledged Jesus as a great figure but did not know His true identity.

Jesus asked His disciples, *"Who do you say that I am?"* and Peter confessed, *"You are the Christ."* Knowing other people's opinions is not enough. What matters is who each person knows and believes Jesus to be.

The Christ is the promised Savior, the One who fulfills the offices of King, High Priest, and Prophet. Jesus is not a mere religious leader or a great human being but the Son of God and fundamentally God the Creator.

As the High Priest, Jesus took on the sins of mankind onto His own body with the baptism He received from John, and, becoming the sacrificial offering, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. As the Prophet He taught God's will of salvation, and as the King He saves those who believe from the power of sin and Satan and rules over them.

To confess Jesus rightly as the Christ is not merely to acknowledge His name or His title. It is to believe with the heart that Jesus is God and the Savior who saved him from sin with the water and the Spirit.

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7. The work of God accomplished through the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection (verse 31)

Jesus taught that He must suffer many things, be rejected by the religious leaders, be killed, and rise again after three days. Jesus' suffering and death were not an unexpected accident or the failure of the plan of salvation. They were the work of God that had to be fulfilled to save sinners.

Before He was nailed to the Cross, Jesus had already taken on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. That the sinless Jesus was judged on the Cross was not because of His own sin but because of the sin of the world He had taken over beforehand.

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed his sins to it, and the offering that had taken over the sins shed its blood and died in the sinner's place. In the same way, Jesus took over all sins through John, the representative of mankind, and as the Lamb of God gave His life on the Cross.

Jesus did not end in death but rose again after three days. The resurrection shows that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who overcame sin and death. The water, the blood, and the Spirit are not three separate gospels; they testify to one complete salvation.

We must not believe only in the blood of the Cross while leaving the water out of salvation, nor speak only of the water while leaving out the Cross. We must believe as one the work by which Jesus took on the sins of mankind, the work by which He received the judgment of those sins, and the work by which He rose from the dead.

8. We must discern the things of God from the thoughts of man (verses 32–33)

Hearing that Jesus would suffer and die, Peter tried to stop Him. He may have spoken out of a heart that loved Jesus and wanted to protect Him, but his words stood in the way of God's plan of salvation.

Jesus sternly rebuked Peter, saying, *"Get behind Me, Satan!"* This does not mean that the man Peter himself was Satan, but that his thinking, which tried to block the Cross, was playing the same role as the will of Satan.

Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, but he wanted only a glorious Christ who fit his own thinking. He could not accept the will of God, that Jesus must save sinners through suffering and death.

With man's thinking, it can be hard to understand the fact that Jesus took on all sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and the fact that He ended all the judgment on the Cross. Man is prone to think that he must confess his sins daily and wash his sins himself, but God says that Jesus accomplished everlasting salvation once and for all.

Even thinking that looks good cannot become right faith if it differs from the word of God. Faith is not adapting God's way of salvation to human reason and religious custom, but laying down one's own thinking and accepting what God has accomplished just as the word says.

9. A life of denying oneself and taking up one's own cross (verse 34)

Jesus said that whoever would come after Him must deny himself and take up his own cross and follow Him. To deny oneself is not to erase one's personality or worth, or to loathe oneself unconditionally.

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Before being saved, self-denial is refusing to rely on one's own righteousness and religious deeds, and admitting that one cannot solve one's sin by one's own strength. Even if it feels in one's own thinking as if sin remains, one must believe the word of God that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the Cross.

After being saved, self-denial is not making one's own desires and judgment the final standard of life, but thinking first of the word of God and the benefit of the gospel. When fleshly thinking hinders the work of serving the gospel, it is choosing God's will over one's own thinking.

To take up one's own cross does not mean accepting every misfortune and disease as fate, or that one must endure another person's violence and abuse. It means bearing by faith the loss, opposition, and toil one undergoes because one follows Jesus and the gospel.

A life of taking up one's own cross is not a condition for obtaining the remission of sins. The remission of sins is received by believing the salvation Jesus completed. One's own cross is the response of faith by which a person who has already been saved serves the gospel and souls out of thankfulness to Jesus, who saved him.

10. The person who uses his life for the gospel (verses 35–37)

Jesus said that the person who tries to save his own life will lose it, and the person who loses his life for Jesus and the gospel will save it. He also said that there is no profit if a man gains the whole world and loses his own life.

If a person makes only the safety of the flesh, possessions, and honor the purpose of his life, he can miss everlasting life. If he cannot solve the problem of sin, death, and judgment even while possessing everything in the world, those possessions

cannot save his soul.

The life of the soul cannot be bought with money or good deeds or religious merit. Only by believing the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection does one obtain everlasting life.

The person who has been saved must not use the rest of his life only for his own flesh, but take part in the work of distributing the Bread of life to others. If he uses his time, possessions, and toil for the gospel, it may look like loss in the world, but before God it remains as everlasting fruit and reward.

To live for the gospel does not mean abandoning all one's daily life and responsibility for one's family. It is faithfully bearing one's responsibilities while setting the most important purpose of life on the kingdom of God and the salvation of souls.

11. We must not be ashamed of Jesus and the gospel (verse 38)

Jesus said that whoever is ashamed of Him and His words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

For fear of the world's appraisal and mockery, a person can hide the gospel or be ashamed to state plainly the way Jesus removed all sins. Neither must we trim the core of the gospel or mix it with worldly teaching on the ground that people find it hard to accept.

The fact that Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged on the Cross, and rose again is not a shameful story but the power of God that gives life to sinners. The person who believes the

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gospel must preach this truth plainly and boldly.

In the present world Jesus and the gospel may seem to be rejected, but Jesus is God and the Judge who will come again in the glory of the Father. The believer must count the appraisal of Jesus, who will come again, more important than people's momentary appraisal.

The core meaning of Mark chapter 8 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

First, Jesus not only gave fleshly bread to the four thousand; He is the Bread of life who gives life to all mankind out of sin and death.

Second, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the abundant and complete spiritual food, lacking nothing for all the people of the world to believe and receive the remission of sins.

Third, the greatest work Jesus accomplished is not a visible miracle but the salvation by which He took on the sins of mankind, was judged for them, and gave everlasting life.

Fourth, the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod refers to human thinking and self-will mixed into the word of God, and to worldly and corrupt teaching, so we must beware of it.

Fifth, Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again, and so completed salvation.

Sixth, for one's spiritual eyes to be opened is to perceive clearly through the word how Jesus took on and removed all one's sins.

Seventh, to confess Jesus as the Christ is to believe the fact that He is the Son of God and the Savior who saved oneself with the water and the Spirit.

Eighth, the work of God is the work by which Jesus saved

sinners and the preaching of that gospel to the whole world, and man's thinking must not stand in the way of this work.

Ninth, to deny oneself is to lay down one's self-righteousness and human thinking and to believe and follow God's word and way of salvation as they are.

Tenth, taking up one's own cross is not a merit for being saved, but the life of faith in which a person who has already received the remission of sins toils and sacrifices for the gospel and for souls.

Eleventh, obtaining everlasting life is more important than gaining the whole world, and the person who has been saved must preach Jesus and the gospel boldly without being ashamed of them.

To sum up in one sentence, Mark chapter 8 is the chapter that shows that Jesus, as the Bread of life, removed all the sins of mankind and gave everlasting life through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, so that we must throw away the leaven of man's thinking and corrupt teaching, open our spiritual eyes and believe Him as the Christ who is God, and, after being saved, deny ourselves, take up our own crosses, and live for the gospel and for souls. ✉

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Mark Chapter 8

The way to know Jesus Christ rightly and follow Him

Introduction

Mark chapter 8 is the chapter in which Jesus fed the four thousand, rebuked the Pharisees who demanded a sign, and warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod. Then, after healing the blind man of Bethsaida and hearing Peter's confession of faith, He taught clearly for the first time the suffering, death, and resurrection He would undergo.

The leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod represents the obstinacy and self-righteousness that see Jesus' words and works and yet do not believe, and the attitude that puts the world's desires and interests ahead of the will of God. Such thinking can enter the heart and cloud faith, as a little leaven spreads through the whole lump of dough. A disciple must not accept people's teachings and values indiscriminately, but discern them with the word of God as the standard.

Peter rightly confessed Jesus as the Christ, but he could not accept Jesus' suffering and death. He put man's thinking ahead of God's plan of salvation and tried to stop Jesus, and was rebuked. To deny oneself and take up one's own cross does not mean hating oneself or paying for one's sins with suffering; it means laying down one's self-righteousness and the thoughts that go against the word, and following the Lord's will.

Jesus took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He

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received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again after three days. The person who believes this completed gospel receives the remission of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The life of following the Lord is not a price paid to obtain salvation but the fruit of faith borne by the person who has already been saved. This chapter teaches us not to call Jesus the Christ with the lips only, but to believe rightly the salvation He accomplished and to follow Him without being ashamed of the gospel.

Jesus had compassion on the multitude who had been with Him three days, and blessed the small provisions and fed four thousand people to the full

"In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.' Then His disciples answered Him, 'How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?' He asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them. So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, immediately got into

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the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha" (Mark 8:1–10).

This event is not a restatement of the feeding of the five thousand recorded in Mark chapter 6, but a separate sign that took place on its own. The passage opens with "*the multitude being very great,*" and this time the multitude had been with Jesus three days, and there were seven loaves and a few small fish. Those who ate were about four thousand, and the leftover fragments filled seven large baskets. Since Jesus Himself later speaks of the feeding of the five thousand and of the four thousand separately, the two events must be distinguished.

In the preceding section, Jesus passed through the regions of Tyre and Sidon and Decapolis and bestowed grace on Gentiles as well. In this flow, a great multitude gathered around Jesus again. They stayed with Jesus for three days, and the provisions they had prepared had already run out. Some had come from afar. They stayed on, bearing discomfort and hunger, in order to hear the word and see the Lord's work.

There is no record that the multitude first demanded something to eat. Jesus saw their situation first and called His disciples and spoke. In the words "*I have compassion on the multitude*" appears the Lord's heart, which looks not only at people's souls but even at the weakness of the body. Jesus knew how many days the multitude had stayed, the fact that they had nothing to eat, and even the circumstances of those who had come from afar. The Lord does not see a person as one among a numberless crowd; He knows each person's needs and limits.

Jesus was concerned that if He sent them away hungry, they would faint on the way. He did not turn away from them, as if to say that since they had been given the spiritual word, they should see to the needs of the body themselves. Man is a being

with both soul and body, so the person who preaches the gospel must not pass by hunger, disease, and the hardships of living with indifference. While counting the salvation of the soul most important, he must also show practical love to suffering neighbors.

The disciples answered, *"How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"* They had already experienced Jesus feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. Yet when they met a similar need again, they looked first at the conditions of the wilderness and their own lack rather than at the Lord's power they had seen before. Having experienced grace once does not mean faith arises automatically before the next difficulty. If we do not remember the grace of past days within the word, we can worry again before the same problem.

As the disciples judged, in the wilderness there was neither a shop nor sufficient provisions to feed four thousand people. That it was impossible by human calculation was a fact. But among them was Jesus, the Creator. Faith is not an attitude that pretends difficulties do not exist; it is seeing, together with the lacking reality, the Lord who is greater than it. The fact that I cannot do it with my own ability does not mean the Lord cannot do it either.

Jesus did not ask the disciples how much they lacked; He asked, *"How many loaves do you have?"* What the disciples had was only seven loaves and a few small fish. Compared with four thousand people it was next to nothing, but Jesus used that small amount. The Lord is not One who works only after a person possesses great ability and much wealth. When we offer what we have in faith and obey, He uses it according to His will.

Jesus had the multitude sit down on the ground in order,

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took the seven loaves, and gave thanks. He blessed the small fish also and gave them to His disciples to set before the multitude. The power that multiplied the food came from Jesus, but He had the disciples take part in delivering it to the people. The disciples could not produce the food, but they could distribute what they had received from the Lord. This is also the position of the church and the evangelist entrusted with the gospel.

The person who preaches the gospel cannot create life or cause anyone to be born again by his own eloquence. But he has the responsibility to set the word of life he has received from Jesus faithfully before hungry souls. He must not serve up his own philosophy and experience as if they were food, but preach the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished, according to the written word. He must not give up while looking only at small numbers and limited circumstances, but believe that the Lord will work through the word of the gospel.

The multitude did not merely get a taste; they all ate and were filled. Jesus' supply did not stop at barely easing their hunger. Even after everyone had eaten enough, the leftover fragments came to seven large baskets. This shows Jesus' creative power and abundant supply. That the leftover fragments were gathered up also shows that the abundance of the Lord's grace does not mean what has been received may be discarded carelessly. Grace is to be shared abundantly, but what God has given is to be managed with thanksgiving.

Only, we must not attach excessive symbolism, which the passage does not explain, to the numbers seven loaves and seven large baskets. The heart of the passage is not a code hidden in the numbers themselves but the compassion and power of Jesus, who fed four thousand people to the full with little food. Nor must we turn this event into a promise that the

person who believes will always become materially prosperous. Jesus really fed the hungry multitude, but the sign was given not so that people would seek only bread, but so that they would believe who He is.

The people who ate the fleshly bread would have grown hungry again, and in the end they grew old and died. Therefore the miracle of feeding the four thousand is not everlasting salvation itself but a sign pointing to Jesus, the Owner of life. Man's more fundamental famine is the spiritual hunger of not knowing the word of God and not hearing the gospel of the remission of sins. Even if one fills one's heart with the world's wealth, knowledge, and pleasures, one cannot obtain true life and peace unless the problem of sin and judgment is solved.

To give Himself as the food of life to spiritually starving sinners, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth. Jesus took on all the sins of the world onto His own body with the baptism He received from John. Carrying those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood and so received the judgment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again after three days. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which makes sinners live forever.

The salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection is not lacking or incomplete. The person who believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of all sins—past, present, and future—once and for all, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. It is not that one must add man's good deeds and prayers of repentance to complete salvation. As the four thousand received the bread the Lord gave and ate their fill, the sinner must receive by faith the righteousness God has completed.

The person who has received the remission of sins must

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also keep eating the food of the gospel. This does not mean that salvation is accomplished repeatedly, but that he must chew over in the word the complete remission of sins he has already received, and gain the strength of faith. If we look only at our own lack and difficulties, we can be pressed down by the conditions of the wilderness like the disciples. At every such time we must remember the fact that Jesus removed all our sins and the fact that He is the Lord who cares for us even now.

Jesus multiplied the bread Himself, but distributed it to the multitude through the disciples' hands. Today as well, the Lord entrusts the work of preaching the gospel to those who have received the remission of sins. Saints and churches must hold the Lord's heart, which has compassion on the souls of the world, and distribute the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately. Even if the time, wealth, and talents one has look small, one can offer them to the Lord and use them for preaching the gospel and serving one's neighbors.

This section shows that even in circumstances like a wilderness, the compassion and power of Jesus are not lacking. The disciples calculated what they did not have, but Jesus received the small provisions they did have and blessed them, and fed four thousand people to the full with something to spare. The believer must not boast of the size of his own ability or make his lack an excuse, but faithfully share what he has received from the Lord. When we preach the complete gospel of the water and the Spirit to spiritually starving people and also care for neighbors in physical hardship with practical love, the Lord gives life to and feeds many people through that service.

The Pharisees did not believe the work of God already revealed but demanded a sign to test Jesus, and the Lord saw their obstinacy and sighed deeply

"Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.' And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side" (Mark 8:11–13).

Jesus had just fed about four thousand people to the full with seven loaves and a few small fish. Before that, He had healed the sick, cast out demons, calmed the storm, and performed the sign of feeding the five thousand. The evidence showing that Jesus is the Son of God and the promised Christ was already appearing in abundance. Yet the Pharisees came out to argue with Jesus rather than to perceive the meaning of that evidence and believe.

When the Scriptures say that they *"began to dispute with"* Jesus, it means that they did not humbly seek His teaching but found fault and pressed Him. The passage states plainly that they sought a sign from Him, *"testing Him."* An honest question that seeks trustworthy evidence and a test that demands proof in order to bring the other down are not the same. God does not turn away the question of the person who asks in order to know the truth, but He rebukes the attitude of the person who has already decided in his heart to refuse, and who sets God under his own conditions.

What the Pharisees sought was *"a sign from heaven."* It was a demand that, since the healings and the casting out of demons and the miracles of bread Jesus had performed were

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not enough, He should show them from heaven some greater and more overwhelming phenomenon they would acknowledge as God's intervention. Outwardly it looks like a request for sure evidence, but in reality it was an attitude of deciding for themselves even the standard and manner of the sign. They tried to stand not in the place of those under judgment, ready to obey Jesus' word, but in the judge's seat, ruling on whether Jesus was genuine.

Seeing many signs does not necessarily lead to believing. The person whose heart is humble comes to Jesus on hearing even a small word, but the person whose heart is obstinate demands new evidence even after seeing countless miracles. When one sign appears he demands another, and if it differs from his expectation he does not acknowledge it. The problem lies not in the quantity of evidence but in the heart that refuses to accept the evidence already given.

Jesus did not deny all signs as such. The healings, the casting out of demons, and the multiplying of bread recorded in the Gospels are all signs that actually took place. But Jesus performed signs out of compassion for suffering people and to reveal that He is the Christ; He did not perform them to satisfy the curiosity of His adversaries or to display His power when challenged. The power of God is not a spectacle for people or a tool of argument.

Jesus "*sighed deeply in His spirit.*" This sigh did not come from any inability to answer the Pharisees' question. He grieved deeply as He saw the obstinate heart that would not repent and that opposed Him even before the many evidences God had bestowed. The Lord who had sighed at the suffering of the man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech in the preceding section, here sighed at the unbelief of a generation that had shut its spiritual ears and eyes. The Lord

does not delight in hating and destroying sinners; He grieves over the person who refuses the truth and goes on his own toward judgment.

The words *"Why does this generation seek a sign?"* make us look back at the hidden motive of the heart that longs for miracles. Asking for help because one believes in God is different from setting the condition that one will believe in God if what one wants comes to pass. The former is prayer that relies on God's sovereignty and goodness, but the latter can become a test that demands God prove Himself. Faith does not arise only when God moves according to my will; it is accepting God's word as true even in situations different from my will.

Jesus said firmly that *"no sign shall be given to this generation."* This is not so much a declaration that He would never perform any miracle again, as a declaration that He would not provide a sign proving Himself in the manner they demanded. Another Gospel recording the same event presents the sign of Jonah—Jesus' death and resurrection—as the ultimate evidence. Not a heavenly spectacle satisfying man's curiosity, but the event of dying and rising again to save sinners is the decisive sign by which the Christ is recognized.

Therefore the Christian faith is not a blind faith that believes without any ground. God has testified sufficiently through the words of the prophets, the life and teaching of Jesus, and the salvation and resurrection He accomplished. At the same time, faith is not something that stands only when God shows a new miracle at each individual's demand. It is accepting the evidence already given through the written word and believing in Jesus Christ as the Savior.

The work of God's salvation, greater and more important than the sign the Pharisees demanded of Jesus, has appeared in

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the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in the flesh to save sinners, and with the baptism He received from John He took on all the sins of the world onto His own body. And carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again after three days. This is the evidence of the salvation God Himself accomplished for sinners.

The person who believes with the heart the word that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. Dreams, visions, speaking in tongues, or supernatural experiences are not indispensable for being saved. Even with such experiences, one cannot receive the remission of sins without believing the gospel; and without any special experience, one becomes a child of God by believing the written gospel of the water and the Spirit. The assurance of salvation must rest not on changeable experiences but on the word God has completed.

Today as well, people can set conditions: if God is alive, heal this disease I want healed, make my business succeed, show me a special phenomenon. God can heal diseases and solve difficulties according to His will, and the saint can ask in faith for the help he needs. But we must not deny God and the gospel because the answer does not come in the way we have set. God is not One who must carry out our orders to prove His existence; He is the Creator whom we must believe and obey.

Neither must we accept unconditionally, as the word of God, the words of a person who puts miracles forward. Rather than claims about marvelous phenomena or healings, we must examine whether what he preaches agrees with the written

gospel. If someone speaks only of the Cross while leaving out Jesus' baptism, or adds man's merit and repeated repentance to the remission of sins, or uses miracles to seek money and honor, we must beware. The Holy Spirit does not subject people to mysterious phenomena; He causes them to believe the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ accomplished.

That Jesus left the Pharisees, got into the boat, and went to the other side is a solemn warning. They came near the Lord and conversed with Him, but because they had no heart to believe, they did not obtain the grace of life. If one keeps refusing the word that has been given and testing God, there can come a time when one hears the word no longer. After the Lord has departed, demanding a greater sign is of no use. While one can still hear the truth, one must humble one's heart and receive it.

This section teaches that the difference between faith and unbelief does not lie in how many signs one has seen. The Pharisees tested Jesus even in the face of much evidence, but true faith recognizes in the word already given that Jesus is the Son of God and the complete Savior. Rather than demanding miracles that fit his own conditions, a person must receive into his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed. The person who believes that gospel is not shaken chasing after signs, but builds his faith on the sure word of God, who has removed all sins.

Jesus told us to beware of the wrong teaching of the Pharisees and of Herod, which corrupts the whole heart like a little leaven

"*Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they*

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did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. Then He charged them, saying, 'Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we have no bread.' But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?' They said to Him, 'Twelve.' 'Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He said to them, 'How is it you do not understand?'" (Mark 8:14–21).

Having finished the dispute with the Pharisees, Jesus got into the boat again with His disciples. But the disciples had forgotten to bring bread to eat, and there was only one loaf in the boat. At that very moment Jesus warned, *"Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."* Because the disciples' minds were caught up in the actual shortage of bread, they took the leaven Jesus spoke of as being about bread to eat.

Even a small amount of leaven spreads through the whole lump of dough and changes its nature. Using this characteristic, Jesus spoke of the danger of wrong teaching and ways of thinking entering a person's heart and corrupting his whole faith. False teaching does not come only in the form of denying all truth from the start. It uses words similar to the gospel while mixing in a small falsehood, and that falsehood gradually comes to rule a person's view of salvation and his life of faith. Therefore we must *"take heed"* and discern carefully.

The leaven of the Pharisees refers to the religious hypocrisy

that outwardly seems to serve God well while in the heart exalting self-righteousness and the traditions of men. They stressed the rules of washing hands and vessels while failing to see the sins that come out of the heart, and they even nullified the commandment of God in order to keep the tradition of the elders. Seeing many signs, they did not believe in Jesus but demanded again a sign of the kind they had determined. In the end, the leaven of the Pharisees is the teaching that makes people believe they can become righteous by their own deeds and religious zeal, and so refuse the salvation the Son of God accomplished.

This does not mean that the effort to live holy and good lives is itself the leaven of the Pharisees. The saint who has received the remission of sins must do good and obey the word, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But if one makes such deeds the condition for obtaining or maintaining the remission of sins, they become self-righteousness. A good life is not the cause of salvation but the fruit borne by the person already saved. If one thinks salvation has been canceled because of the lack of one's deeds and tries to wash one's sins anew every day, one can fall into the error of making the salvation Jesus completed into something incomplete.

The leaven of Herod shows the attitude that puts the world's power, desire, and people's appraisal ahead of the word of God. Herod listened to John the Baptist and yet did not turn from his sin, and to keep the oath he had made before people and to save his face, he killed the righteous John. Though he knew the truth to some degree, he did not want to lose power, pleasure, and political advantage. Such worldly calculation also comes to rule a person's heart little by little, until in the end he chooses his own safety and success over the word of God.

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The leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod differ in outward appearance. One wears the garment of devout-looking religion, and the other appears in the form of following the world's power and desires. But both are the same in that they do not believe in Jesus Christ and exalt human thinking above the word of God. A person can oppose the gospel with religious self-righteousness, and he can also turn away from the gospel because of worldly greed and fear. The saint must beware in both directions.

Hearing Jesus' warning, the disciples reasoned among themselves, *"It is because we have no bread."* They may have thought Jesus was indirectly rebuking their fault of failing to bring bread. With their minds caught by the needs of the flesh and their own mistake, they failed to hear the more important spiritual danger the Lord was speaking of. When a person is seized by worry or guilt, he can interpret every word in terms of his own problem and miss its original meaning.

Jesus knew what the disciples were discussing with one another. And He asked, *"Why do you reason because you have no bread?"* These words do not mean that preparing needed provisions or working responsibly is wrong. Jesus had just had compassion on the hungry multitude and fed them Himself. The problem was that because there was only one loaf, the disciples forgot that Jesus was with them and failed to understand the spiritual warning.

Jesus rebuked them: *"Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?"* A hardened heart does not mean a lack of intellectual ability; it is the state of failing to connect the work of God one has already seen and heard with present faith. The disciples had seen with their eyes the miracles Jesus performed and heard the word with their ears, but they had not deeply accepted the fact that He is the

Creator, who can fill any lack.

The words *"Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?"* warn that the disciples could fall into a danger similar to the obstinacy of the Pharisees they had just seen. The Pharisees saw signs and did not believe in Jesus, and the disciples, while following Jesus, did not sufficiently perceive the meaning of the signs. The fact of having been long at Jesus' side, or of having heard many sermons, does not automatically brighten the heart. One must exalt the word above one's own thinking and accept its meaning by faith.

Jesus asked the disciples how many baskets of fragments were left when He fed the five thousand. They answered exactly: twelve. To the question of how many large baskets were left when He fed the four thousand, they also answered: seven. They remembered the numbers and the events, but they could not apply to their present situation the identity and power of Jesus that those signs testified to. Memorizing the contents of the Scriptures is different from believing that word and making it the actual standard of judgment.

Jesus did not remind them of the two events in order to promise that whenever bread ran short He would surely create it by miracle. Since the Lord who fed the five thousand and the four thousand was with them, they had no need to lose faith over the problem of having only one loaf; and He was making them perceive that the leaven He was now speaking of was a spiritual problem far graver than fleshly bread. A shortage of material things can leave the stomach hungry for a while, but a false gospel can leave the soul in sin and bring it to everlasting judgment.

The leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod today can appear as teaching that mixes man's works and the world's desires into the gospel. Speaking of Jesus' Cross while teaching that

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sins are washed away only if one offers prayers of repentance daily, or that salvation is maintained only by good deeds and service, is adding man's merit to the completed salvation. Conversely, teaching that if you believe in Jesus you will surely become rich, be healed, and succeed in the world is also leaven that turns the gospel into a means of fulfilling fleshly desires.

To guard the heart from such false teaching, we must know the pure gospel of the water and the Spirit exactly. Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth to save sinners and took on all the sins of the world onto His own body with the baptism He received from John. And carrying those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again after three days. This is the righteousness of God, unmixed with man's works or the world's desires.

The person who believes with the heart the gospel that Jesus completely removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. There is no need to add repeated washings of sin or human merit to this. And this gospel is not a promise to obtain everything one wants in the world; it is the word of life that saves from sin and judgment and lets one live as God's child.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, the work of discerning false teaching remains necessary. As a little leaven spreads through the whole lump, if one repeatedly hears wrong words, even the thinking of a born-again person can be shaken and the assurance of the gospel clouded. Do not judge by the preacher's fame, the size of the church, long tradition, or special experiences; examine by the Scriptures whether the

teaching testifies exactly to the salvation Jesus accomplished. Teaching that clouds the gospel must be refused firmly from the start.

At the same time, the saint must take care not to miss the spiritual word because of the worries of living. Prepare responsibly for food and work and health, but do not let worry occupy the whole heart. When difficulty arises, do not count only what is lacking now, but remember the salvation and care bestowed until now. When we remember the greatest grace—that He removed all our sins—we rely on God even amid the lack of reality and bear wisely the work that is needed.

This section teaches what the believer must remember and what he must beware of. The disciples remembered the number of loaves but did not perceive the meaning of the signs, and, absorbed in the lack of the flesh, they missed the warning about false teaching. The saint must keep remembering the fact that Jesus has saved him completely with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. With that sure gospel as the standard, he must discern the self-righteousness of the Pharisees and the worldly desire of Herod, and hold fast to the word of God so that not even a small falsehood spreads in his heart.

Jesus took the blind man by the hand and laid His hands on him twice, and made him see all things clearly

"Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, 'I see men like trees,

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walking.' Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. Then He sent him away to his house, saying, 'Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town'" (Mark 8:22–26).

When Jesus and His disciples arrived at Bethsaida, people brought a man who could not see and begged Jesus to touch him. He was in a position where it was hard for him to find his way to Jesus by his own strength, but the people around him led him to Jesus. They could not open his eyes themselves, but they could bring him to the One who could. This shows the role of the person who preaches the gospel. The evangelist has no power to cause a soul to be born again, but he can lead sinners before Jesus Christ and the word of the salvation He accomplished.

Jesus took the man by the hand and led him out of the town. Extending His hand to a man who could not see was not merely an act of helping him move; it reveals the Lord's mercy, caring for him as a person. Jesus did not make him a spectacle before many people but took him aside. The Lord's power was not a means of satisfying people's curiosity or gaining religious fame. Jesus counted one soul precious and worked in the way that person needed.

There was no magical power in the actions themselves, when Jesus spit on his eyes and laid hands on him. Jesus healed some with only a word, laid His hands on others, and for this man He spit on his eyes and laid His hands on him. Therefore these actions must not be made into a religious rite or healing formula, as if repeating them would produce the same power. The power that healed people was not in saliva or in hands but in Jesus, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth.

After first laying His hands on him, Jesus asked him *if he saw anything*, and he answered honestly, *"I see men like trees,*

walking." Unlike before, he could see something, but he could not yet distinguish things clearly. He could see people moving, but their forms looked dim, like trees. Though he could not see well, he did not pretend to see everything, and he stated just as it was the state of what he was seeing at present.

It was not that Jesus failed to heal him completely with the first laying on of hands because His power was insufficient. Jesus had already healed diseases with a single word, cast out demons, and calmed even the wind and the sea. He could have healed this man at once as well. Yet for this man He restored sight in two stages. This makes us think of the Lord's guidance, caring for one person attentively, and also of the spiritual state of the disciples, who watched Jesus and yet did not clearly perceive who He was.

Just before this event, Jesus had rebuked His disciples: *"Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember?"* The disciples had seen Jesus' miracles with their own eyes, yet, held by the worry that bread was short, they failed to perceive His power and His word. They had followed Jesus and seen much, but like a man seeing people dimly as trees, they did not yet know clearly who Jesus was and what salvation He would accomplish.

Today as well, one can know about Jesus to some degree and yet fail to see the core of the gospel clearly. Even if one knows as knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the Cross, and is diligent in church life and good deeds, if one does not know when and by what method all one's sins were passed on to Jesus, sin still remains in one's heart. Believing in Jesus vaguely and believing clearly, according to the word, the salvation He accomplished are not the same.

However, a physical inability to see must not be judged as evidence of that person's personal sin or unbelief. The man in

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the passage really suffered difficulty with his sight, and Jesus had compassion on him and healed him. This healing of the body is a sign revealing that Jesus is the Son of God, holding the Creator's power. At the same time, the placement of the passage and the process of the healing illuminate how a person who hears the word and does not perceive must be led to clear faith. Yet we cannot promise that if one believes the gospel, every disease and disability of the body will surely disappear in this world.

When Jesus laid His hands on his eyes again, he looked intently, and he was restored and came to see all things clearly. He did not remain in the first state; when the Lord touched him again, he saw everything distinctly. The person who hears the gospel must also not insist that his incomplete understanding is right, but keep hearing the word of God. He must honestly acknowledge what he knows and what he does not yet know, and perceive exactly, through the word, the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

Jesus took on the sins of all the people of the world onto His own body with the baptism He received from John. The sinless Son of God received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of sinners, and so received and bore all the sins of mankind; and carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood, receiving the judgment of sin in our place. And He was buried and rose again from the dead after three days, overcoming sin and death and completing salvation. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that a person must see clearly and believe.

In the process of first learning the gospel, one's understanding can be dim or partial. But salvation itself is not accomplished in such a way that some sins disappear at the first stage and the remaining sins disappear at the second. The

moment one wholly believes the righteousness of God accomplished through the baptism received from John the Baptist, the death on the Cross, and the resurrection, one receives the remission of all sins—past, present, and future—once and for all, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift and is born again. The process of learning the word and growing in faith continues afterward, but the remission of sins Jesus accomplished is not incomplete or completed by repetition.

Jesus sent the man whose eyes had been opened to his house, commanding him not even to go into the town. He had the healed man obey the Lord's word and return to his own house rather than remain amid people's attention and excitement. The passage does not explain in detail every reason for that command, but what is clear is that Jesus did not make His power into a noisy spectacle. For the person who has received grace, what matters is not exaggerating his experience to display himself, but following the word of the Lord.

The person who preaches the gospel must also not force others to confess faith hastily. He must look at what the other person knows and what he does not yet clearly know, and explain the gospel of the water and the Spirit step by step through the word. What changes a person is not the evangelist's zeal or eloquence but the Holy Spirit, who works through the word of God. The evangelist must not make people depend on himself, but lead them before Jesus and help them see the Lord's salvation clearly and believe it with the heart.

This section teaches us not to be content with a state of knowing about Jesus dimly. We must know clearly—not by man's religious zeal or emotional experience—how Jesus took on all sins, was judged for them, and rose again. Jesus, who took the blind man by the hand and healed him to the end so that he saw all things clearly, brightens the dark heart of the

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sinner today as well with the word of the gospel. The person who lays down his own thinking and receives into his heart the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins, and lives seeing Jesus Christ clearly in the Holy Spirit.

Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ yet stood in the way of the Cross, and the Lord taught that to follow God's salvation we must deny our own thoughts

"Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, 'Who do men say that I am?' So they answered, 'John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said to Him, 'You are the Christ.' Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him. And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.' When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, 'Whoever 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 and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit 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 whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels'" (Mark 8:27–38).

On the way to the towns of Caesarea Philippi with His disciples, Jesus asked who people said He was. The disciples answered that some said John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others one of the prophets. Seeing Jesus' words and power, people acknowledged Him as a special prophet, but they did not know His true identity and saving work. Knowing Jesus only as an excellent teacher or a miracle-working prophet is not the faith that knows Him rightly.

Jesus went on to ask, *"Who do you say that I am?"* Knowing how other people evaluated Jesus was not enough. What mattered was who the disciples themselves believed Jesus to be. Today as well, knowing the faith one's family or church holds is different from believing the gospel with one's own heart. Salvation does not lie in acknowledging Jesus by public opinion or tradition, but in knowing and believing who He is and what He accomplished for oneself.

Peter answered, *"You are the Christ." "Christ"* means the Messiah, the One anointed and sent by God. Jesus is the King God promised, the High Priest of heaven, the Son of God who came to save sinners, and the Prophet who makes known the will of God. Therefore Peter's confession did not acknowledge Jesus as one prophet among many, but confessed Him as the only Savior, who would save His people from their sins.

After hearing this confession, Jesus warned His disciples to tell no one that He was the Christ. In those days, people were liable to misunderstand the Christ as a king who would take political power and liberate Israel from Roman rule. If He were

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widely proclaimed as the Christ while His suffering, death, and resurrection were unknown, people could receive Jesus' ministry as a movement to gain worldly power. What kind of Christ Jesus is had to be revealed clearly through the saving work He would accomplish.

So Jesus now plainly taught His disciples for the first time that He must suffer many things, be rejected and killed, and rise again after three days. The Christ was not One who would save sinners with the world's political power, but One who would accomplish salvation by taking on the sinner's sins, receiving their judgment in his place, and rising from the dead.

Hearing this word, Peter took hold of Jesus and began to remonstrate with Him. In his action there was the human heart that wished to keep his beloved Teacher from suffering and dying. But his words wished Jesus to avoid suffering and the Cross, and as a result they were a thought that stood in the way of God's work of saving sinners. However good and warm-hearted a thought may look, if it goes against the word of God and His plan of salvation, it cannot be called a thought of faith.

Jesus sternly rebuked Peter before the disciples: *"Get behind Me, Satan!"* This does not mean that the man Peter himself was Satan, or that he was demon-possessed. He rebuked him so because Peter's words were the same as Satan's will, which would have Jesus avoid suffering and the Cross. Jesus had Peter stop trying to direct the way before the Lord and return to the disciple's place—the place of following the word behind the Lord.

Peter's problem lay in being mindful not of the things of God but of the things of men. To man's thinking, avoiding suffering and gaining safety and success seems only natural. But the work of God was that the Christ should give His own body to bring sinners to life. Peter thought he loved Jesus, but

he put his own judgment ahead of the word of God. Faith is not persuading the Lord to follow one's own will; it is laying down one's thinking when it differs from the word and following the Lord's will. Therefore Jesus did not rebuke Peter's confession of faith itself as false; He sternly rebuked the thinking of man that stood in the way of God's saving work.

By this time, Jesus had already taken on the sins of all the people of the world onto His own body with the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. Because the sinless Jesus had received all the sins of sinners passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, He had to go forward to the Cross carrying those sins and be judged. And He had to rise again after three days, overcoming sin and death and revealing that He is the Son of God and the perfect Savior. If even one of Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection is left out, the salvation the Christ accomplished cannot be explained in full.

Jesus called the multitude together with His disciples and said, "*Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*" To deny oneself does not mean to hate one's own being or to erase every opinion and individuality. It is to throw away the self-righteousness that believes it can save itself, and to stop insisting on the fleshly thoughts and desires that collide with the word of God. As Peter had to come down from the place of trying to teach the Lord ahead of Him and follow the Lord's word, the believer too must exalt the word of God above his own judgment.

The cross a disciple takes up is not the same as the atoning Cross Jesus bore. The One who took on all the sins of the world and received the judgment of sin in the sinner's place is Jesus Christ alone. However much suffering a person undergoes and however much he sacrifices, he cannot wash

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away his own sins or another's. The cross a disciple takes up means bearing the loss and hardship he meets while believing and following the gospel, and the pain of laying down his own will. Nor is this word a command to endure unjust violence and abuse unconditionally or to manufacture suffering for oneself.

"Whoever desires to save his life will lose it"—these words, too, do not mean to treat the life of the body lightly or to seek death recklessly. They are a warning that if one refuses Jesus and the gospel out of the desire to live safely and comfortably for oneself alone in the world, one will in the end lose everlasting life. Conversely, the person who lays down the world's recognition and advantage for Jesus and the gospel and bears even persecution may seem to lose his life on this earth, but he obtains true life in the Lord.

Even if a man gains the whole world, if he loses his own life, the subject who would enjoy it disappears. Though he gathers all the world's wealth and power and honor, he cannot buy back a soul already lost or rescue it from the judgment of sin. Because the price of a soul's salvation cannot be paid with what man has, the Son of God took on our sins with His baptism and gave His own life on the Cross. Salvation is not a reward a person earns by sacrificing his own life, but grace received by believing the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished in our place.

Jesus took over all our sins with the baptism He received from John, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and was buried and rose again after three days. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is born again. The life of denying oneself and taking up one's cross is not a price paid to obtain the remission of sins, but the fruit of a life in which the

person who was saved freely serves the gospel following the guidance of the Holy Spirit who dwells in him.

Finally, Jesus warned that He would be ashamed, when He comes again, of whoever is ashamed of Him and His words in this adulterous and sinful generation. When Jesus first came, He bore the Cross in the form of a suffering servant, but when He comes again, He comes in the glory of the Father with the holy angels. Therefore we must not hide the gospel to avoid people's mockery or alter the truth to gain the world's approval. A continuing attitude of being ashamed of the gospel reveals what a person actually treasures and believes more.

This section teaches that we must go beyond calling Jesus the Christ with the mouth and know and believe exactly the salvation He accomplished. Even one who, like Peter, has rightly confessed Jesus as the Christ must not refuse God's way of salvation with his own thinking. A right confession of faith must lead on to the faith that exalts the salvation the Christ accomplished and the word of God above one's own thoughts. Jesus is the Christ, who completely saved sinners with the water, the blood, and the Spirit. The person who believes this gospel and has received the remission of sins must count one soul more precious than the world's advantage, deny his own thinking, and follow the Lord and the gospel without shame even amid hardship. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Mark Chapter 8

[Question] 1. At what point in Jesus' public life did the events of Mark chapter 8 take place?

The events of Mark chapter 8 took place when, in Jesus' public life, His ministry in Galilee and the surrounding regions was reaching its latter part, and He was beginning to enter the road toward the death of the Cross and the resurrection. Since the exact dates are not recorded in the text, they cannot be fixed with certainty, but the events are generally understood as belonging to the time drawing near the last period of Jesus' public life.

In the first part of the chapter, Jesus continued the ministry of feeding a great multitude and healing the sick. But the Pharisees tested Jesus and demanded a sign from heaven, and even the disciples did not perceive the miracle of the loaves they had already experienced. This shows that it was a period when, although Jesus' power had been fully revealed, the opposition of the religious leaders was growing stronger, and the disciples' spiritual perception was still lacking.

In the latter part of the chapter, Jesus went with His disciples to the towns of Caesarea Philippi. When Peter there confessed Jesus as the Christ, Jesus began for the first time to teach His disciples plainly that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected and killed, and rise again after three days.

Mark chapter 8 is therefore a turning point at which the

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public ministry centered on Galilee enters its closing stage, and Jesus passes over to the period of teaching His disciples intensively about the Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection and about the way of the disciple. The flow of the Gospel of Mark also begins to focus, from the latter part of chapter 8, on Jesus' suffering and the road toward Jerusalem.

The events of Mark chapter 8, then, are not events of the early days of Jesus' public life, but events of its latter part, when, after revealing who He was through so many words and miracles, He began in earnest to teach His disciples the meaning of the Cross and the resurrection.

[Question] 2. Mark 8:1–3—why did Jesus come to feed the multitude of four thousand?

The great multitude had been with Jesus for three days already, listening to His word, and all the food they had brought had run out, so they had nothing to eat. Among them were people who had come from afar.

Jesus knew the multitude's situation and said, *"I have compassion on the multitude."* He intended to feed them because He was concerned that if He sent them home hungry, they would faint on the way back.

This shows that Jesus looked attentively not only at the multitude's souls but at their bodily hunger and even the road they had to travel home. The miracle of feeding the four thousand began from Jesus' deep compassion toward hungry people.

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[Question] 3. Explain the various views surrounding the miracles of Jesus feeding the four thousand and feeding the five thousand.

The views interpreting the feeding of the four thousand and the feeding of the five thousand can be divided broadly into the view that sees the two as separate miracles that actually happened on different occasions, the view that sees them as one event handed down in different traditions, and the view that stresses the theological difference between the two events.

The most natural reading of the text is to see the two miracles as separate events that took place at different times. In the feeding of the five thousand, the disciples first said the hour was late and asked Him to send the multitude away, and Jesus fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fish. After the people had eaten their fill, twelve baskets were left over.

In the feeding of the four thousand, the great multitude had already been with Jesus three days, and Jesus first had compassion on the hungry multitude. The food used this time was seven loaves and a few small fish, and after about four thousand people had eaten their fill, seven large baskets were left over. The number of people, the number of loaves and fish, the length of the multitude's stay, who first mentioned the multitude's situation—Jesus or the disciples—and the number of vessels holding the leftover fragments all differ. The English Bible used here also distinguishes the two terms: the leftover fragments from the first event are *"baskets,"* while those from the second are *"large baskets."*

The strongest ground that the two events are separate lies in the fact that Jesus recalled the two events distinctly in Mark 8:19 and 20. Jesus asked His disciples separately about the fact that when He broke the five loaves for the five thousand, they

took up twelve baskets, and when He broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, they took up seven large baskets. The final record of the Gospel of Mark itself unfolds the story on the premise that there were two feeding miracles.

On the other hand, some critical scholars raise the possibility that the two records are different traditions arising from what was originally one feeding event. For both stories share a very similar structure: a great multitude in a deserted place had nothing to eat, Jesus gave thanks over a few loaves and fish and gave them to His disciples, and everyone ate their fill and much food was left over. They also consider it unnatural that the disciples, who had already experienced the miracle of the five thousand, asked again, *"How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"* In this view, one event changed in numbers and details as it was handed down separately in Jewish and Gentile communities, and Mark recorded both traditions. This 'double tradition' view is introduced in Catholic biblical commentaries as well.

However, the mere fact that the disciples again showed a faithless response in a similar situation cannot settle the two events as one. The Gospel of Mark repeatedly records how the disciples saw many miracles and yet did not perceive their meaning and were dull of heart. Moreover, since Jesus Himself distinguished the numbers of people and of leftover baskets in the two events, it is proper, when following the flow of the biblical text, to accept them as two different miracles.

Another view pays attention to the difference in audience and theological meaning between the two events. It sees the feeding of the five thousand as representing the ministry centered on the Jews of Galilee, and the feeding of the four thousand—recorded after He passed through the regions of Tyre and Sidon and Decapolis—as representing grace toward

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Gentiles or a multitude of Jews and Gentiles mixed together. Accordingly, some interpret the twelve baskets as symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel, and the seven large baskets as God's complete and abundant supply toward all nations. There is also the interpretation that sees the two feeding miracles as a sign of the salvation given to both Jews and Gentiles.

However, the Gospel of Mark does not directly explain that the multitude of four thousand were all Gentiles, or what the symbols of twelve and seven are. Such interpretations are therefore meaningful applications based on the geographical and literary flow before and after, but they must not be asserted as identical with the facts the text states explicitly.

Taking the two events together, Jesus did not finish with one special miracle; He is the One who repeatedly had compassion on the hungry multitude and made little food abundant and fed them. Both miracles stress that Jesus' supply is not lacking, and that the Lord gave the bread to His disciples and had it distributed to the multitude through the disciples. Spiritually, they show the Lord's saving work of amply distributing the gospel, the bread of life, to souls starving in a wilderness-like world.

Therefore, while the various views can be introduced fairly, when we follow the testimony of the text of Mark and Jesus' words recalling the two events separately, it is most appropriate to understand the miracles of feeding the four thousand and the five thousand as two events that actually took place at different times.

[Question] 4. Mark 8:4—what do the disciples' words, *"How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"* mean?

The disciples' words mean that obtaining enough bread to feed so great a multitude in an uninhabited wilderness was practically impossible. They looked only at the environment, where there was no village to buy food and no provisions prepared.

The disciples had already experienced the miracle in which Jesus fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. Yet when they met a similar situation again, they did not remember the earlier miracle and rely on Jesus' power, but tried to solve the problem with their own calculations and ability. These words show that the disciples' spiritual perception and faith were still lacking.

The judgment itself, that they could not feed the multitude with their own ability, was true. Their fault lay not in admitting their lack, but in failing to believe that Jesus, who fills that lack, was beside them. Faith is not denying a hard reality, but remembering and relying on the power of the Lord, who is greater than that reality.

[Question] 5. Mark 8:5—what did Jesus ask His disciples?

Jesus asked His disciples, *"How many loaves do you have?"* The disciples answered that they had seven loaves.

Jesus made the disciples, who had been looking only at what they did not have, examine what they presently had. Seven loaves were far from enough to feed four thousand

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people, but Jesus received that small amount and used it abundantly.

[Question] 6. Mark 8:6—what did Jesus command the multitude?

Jesus commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. When the multitude sat down according to His word, Jesus took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His disciples to set before the multitude.

That the multitude first obeyed Jesus' word and took their places, and then received the food, shows that the Lord's work was carried out in obedience to the word and in order.

[Question] 7. Mark 8:8—what became of the seven large baskets of leftover fragments after they had eaten and were filled?

After everyone had eaten and was filled, the disciples took up the leftover fragments of bread and fish. Those leftover fragments filled seven large baskets.

This shows that Jesus did not merely keep the multitude from starving, but supplied so abundantly that there was more than enough even after feeding everyone fully.

[Question] 8. Mark 8:11—what did the Pharisees come to Jesus and seek?

The Pharisees came out, disputing with Jesus, and sought

from Him a sign from heaven in order to test Him.

They had seen Jesus heal the sick, cast out demons, and feed great numbers of people, and yet did not believe. They demanded a sign not with a heart that would believe if they saw a greater sign, but with the attitude of unbelief that sought to test Jesus and find fault with Him.

[Question] 9. Mark 8:12–13—what did Jesus do to the Pharisees who sought a sign?

Jesus saw the unbelief of the Pharisees seeking a sign and sighed deeply in His spirit. Then He said, *"Why does this generation seek a sign?"* and declared that no sign would be given to this generation.

Jesus did not refuse because He lacked the power to perform a sign. The Pharisees had already encountered many words and miracles and had not believed, and they demanded yet another sign in order to test Jesus and find fault with Him. For unbelief that demands only signs without any heart to believe God, no further sign could produce true faith.

Jesus left them, got into the boat again, and went to the other side. This shows that toward the person who deliberately refuses after seeing sufficient evidence, He rebukes the unbelief itself rather than showing more signs.

[Question] 10. Mark 8:15—what leaven did Jesus tell His disciples to beware of?

Jesus warned His disciples, *"Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."*

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The leaven here is not actual leaven put into bread, but a figure for wrong teaching and evil influence spreading through people's hearts and communities. The leaven of the Pharisees refers to the hypocrisy and unbelief that see signs and yet do not believe, and that put outward piety and the traditions of men first.

The text does not directly explain what the leaven of Herod is, but it can be understood as referring to the worldly lust for power, concern for face, and attitude of compromising with sin that appeared in Herod. Jesus told them to take care that such unbelief, hypocrisy, and worldly thinking not spread into the disciples' hearts as well, like a little leaven.

[Question] 11. Mark 8:16—how did the disciples respond on hearing Jesus' words about the leaven?

Hearing Jesus' word to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod, the disciples reasoned among themselves that He had said it because they had no bread.

Jesus spoke figuratively of the unbelief and wrong influence of the Pharisees and Herod, but the disciples did not perceive His meaning and took it only as a matter of fleshly bread. This shows that even after experiencing the miracle of the loaves twice, they were still worried about food and were failing to understand Jesus' words spiritually.

[Question] 12. Mark 8:17–21—what did Jesus say to the disciples who had misunderstood?

Jesus knew that the disciples were reasoning about having

no bread, and asked why they reasoned because they had no bread. And He rebuked them, asking whether they still did not perceive or understand, and whether their heart was hardened.

He also asked whether, having eyes, they did not see, and having ears, they did not hear, and whether they did not remember the things they had already experienced. The disciples had seen Jesus' miracles with their eyes and heard His words with their ears, but they were failing to perceive with the heart, through those things, who Jesus is and what He was teaching.

Jesus made them remember again the fact that when He broke the five loaves for the five thousand, the leftover fragments were twelve baskets, and when He broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, they were seven large baskets. He was awakening them to the fact that a lack of fleshly bread was not a problem for the disciples to worry about, and that Jesus supplies whatever food is needed.

Finally Jesus asked, *"How is it you do not understand?"* The word about leaven was not a rebuke over their failure to prepare actual bread; it was a spiritual warning to beware of the unbelief, hypocrisy, and worldly influence of the Pharisees and of Herod. The disciples, seized by the material problem before their eyes, were missing the meaning of that word.

[Question] 13. Mark 8:22–23—where did Jesus and His disciples arrive by boat?

The place where Jesus and His disciples arrived by boat was Bethsaida. The people there brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Him to touch him.

Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the

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town. So the place they arrived at was Bethsaida, but the healing of the blind man took place after Jesus had led him outside the town.

[Question] 14. Mark 8:23—what did Jesus do for the blind man the people brought?

Jesus Himself took by the hand the blind man the people had brought, and led him out of the town. Then He spit on his eyes, laid His hands on him, and asked him what he saw.

Jesus did not let the man who could not see walk alone, but took his hand and led him personally. The text does not state the reason He led him out of the town, but it shows how He did not make the man a spectacle for the crowd, and met him personally and cared for him attentively.

[Question] 15. Mark 8:24–25—what unique feature appears in the miracle of healing the blind man of Bethsaida?

The most unique feature of this miracle is that the blind man's sight was not restored completely at once but brightened in two stages. When Jesus first spit on his eyes and laid His hands on him and asked what he saw, he answered, *"I see men like trees, walking."* Before, he could see nothing at all, but now he could see people's movements, while his vision was still so dim that he could not clearly distinguish people from trees.

When Jesus laid His hands on his eyes again, he looked intently, and he was completely healed and came to see

everything clearly. Many healings recorded in the Gospels were accomplished immediately and completely, but in this event there appears a process leading from partial recovery to complete recovery.

This does not mean that Jesus' power was insufficient and He failed to heal completely the first time. Jesus was not ignorant of the blind man's state; He Himself asked him *if he saw anything*, and He laid His hands on him again and made him see completely. It can be understood that Jesus, intentionally and through a two-stage process, was teaching how not only the eyes of the body but also the eyes of the spirit must become clear.

Earlier, Jesus had rebuked His disciples, *"Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear?"* The disciples had seen Jesus' miracles but had not fully perceived who He is and the meaning of His ministry. Soon after, Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ and yet could not accept the word that Jesus must suffer, die, and rise again. Like the blind man who saw people dimly as trees, he knew Jesus in part. This miracle therefore shows that the disciples' spiritual eyes also had to be brightened gradually through Jesus' word.

Also, that Jesus first took the blind man's hand and led him out of the town gives the lesson that in order to open one's spiritual eyes, one must come out of one's familiar thinking and wrong religious notions and stand before the word of God. As the blind man could not open his eyes by his own strength, so a person cannot remove the sin of his heart or see spiritual truth clearly by his own effort, good deeds, and religious discipline. He must meet Jesus and know and believe, according to the word, what He has accomplished.

For one's spiritual eyes to be brightened is not to stop at knowing Jesus dimly, as merely an excellent teacher or a

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worker of miracles, but to perceive clearly how He saved sinners. Jesus took on all the sins of all mankind once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins and died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all sins, is born again, and becomes a righteous person before God.

However, this two-stage healing does not mean that the remission of sins is also accomplished incompletely, over several occasions. The salvation Jesus completed was accomplished perfectly once and for all. This event shows that a person's understanding can at first be dim, but when he lays down his own thinking and keeps learning the word of God and comes to see Christ's salvation clearly, his spiritual eyes are brightened. That he first saw in part but at last saw everything clearly is both the unique feature of this miracle and its important lesson.

[Question] 16. Mark 8:26—what did Jesus say as He sent the healed blind man home?

As Jesus sent the man whose eyes had been opened to his house, He said, "*Neither go into the town.*" Jesus had first taken him by the hand and led him out of the town of Bethsaida and healed his eyes, and even after he was healed, He commanded him not to go back into that town.

The text does not explain the direct reason Jesus gave this command. We cannot, therefore, fix on only one explanation—whether it was because of the townspeople's unbelief, or to keep the miracle from spreading needlessly. What is certain is that Jesus did not have him return to the place where he had

been healed, but sent him home.

Applying this event spiritually, the town makes us think of the world of one's own thinking and wrong beliefs in which a person has long lived familiarly. In that town the blind man could feel his way along familiar paths even with his eyes closed, but as long as he stayed there, he could not see. Jesus took his hand, led him out of the familiar town, and then opened his eyes.

In the same way, to open one's spiritual eyes, one must leave the human thoughts, doctrines, and religious customs one has long believed when they differ from the word of God. One must lay down the thought that one can wash away the sins of the heart with one's own efforts, prayers of repentance, and good deeds, and believe, just as the word says, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed.

The word not to return to the town after being healed gives the lesson that the person who has received the remission of all sins and been born again must not go back to his old wrong beliefs and self-righteousness. The righteous person who has received the remission of sins must not be bound again by former false teachings or try to complete his salvation by his own works, but keep his faith within the word of God that made him see clearly. However, this is a spiritual application of verse 26; the text itself does not directly define the word *"town"* as doctrine or human thinking.

[Question] 17. What kind of place is Caesarea Philippi, which appears in verse 27?

Caesarea Philippi is a city and its surrounding region located about forty kilometers north of the Sea of Galilee, at

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the southern foot of Mount Hermon, near one of the sources of the Jordan River. In Jesus' day it was close to the northern boundary of the Jewish regions, and the influence of Gentile culture and religion was strong. Today it is generally associated with the area called Banias.

The old name of this region was Paneas or Panias. The Greeks regarded its cave and spring as a sanctuary related to Pan, the god of shepherding and nature, and worshiped there. Herod the Great built a temple there for the Roman emperor Augustus, and his son Philip the tetrarch, after expanding the city, called it Caesarea in the emperor's honor. And to distinguish it from the other Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast and to display his own name as well, he called it 'Philip's Caesarea,' that is, *"Caesarea Philippi."*

Caesarea Philippi is a different place from Philippi in Macedonia, which appears in the Acts of the Apostles. Mark 8:27, too, does not state that Jesus entered the city itself, but records that He went out with His disciples to the towns of Caesarea Philippi.

This was a region with traces of many idols and of emperor worship. It was against precisely that background that Jesus asked His disciples who people said He was, and who the disciples believed He was. There Peter confessed Jesus as the *"Christ."* Though the text does not directly interpret the religious background of the place, the fact that Jesus was confessed as the true Christ in a region where many gods and emperors were exalted forms all the sharper a contrast.

[Question] 18. Mark 8:27–30—compare how Peter's confession of faith is recorded differently in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record that Jesus first asked who people said He was, then asked His disciples, *"But who do you say that I am?"* and Peter answered as their representative. The central content of the three Gospels is the same, but the situation in which the question was asked, the people's answers, the wording of Peter's confession, and the words Jesus gave after the confession differ slightly.

Mark 8:27–30 records that this conversation took place while Jesus and His disciples were on the road to the towns of Caesarea Philippi. When Jesus asked, *"Who do men say that I am?"* the disciples answered that people called Jesus John the Baptist, or Elijah, or one of the prophets. When Jesus then asked, *"But who do you say that I am?"* Peter confessed, *"You are the Christ."* It is the shortest and most concise confession among the three Gospels. Jesus warned them to tell no one about Him.

Matthew 16:13–20 also identifies the place as the region of Caesarea Philippi, but records Jesus' first question as *"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"* The people's opinions include not only John the Baptist and Elijah but also the name of Jeremiah. Peter's confession is recorded at its longest and clearest: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Mark concentrates on the title *"Christ,"* while Matthew stresses together that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the living God.

In Matthew, Jesus' answer given after the confession is also recorded in the most detail. Jesus called Peter *"Simon Bar-Jonah"* and pronounced him blessed, and said that the one who had revealed this to him was not flesh and blood but the Father

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in heaven. He went on to speak of building His church on this rock, of the gates of Hades not prevailing against it, and of giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven, with the authority to bind and loose on earth. Mark and Luke do not record this content and convey only the command to tell no one that He is the Christ. This does not mean that Mark and Luke deny Matthew's content, but that what each Gospel selected and stressed is different.

Luke 9:18–21 does not identify the place as Caesarea Philippi, and records that the disciples were with Jesus as He was praying alone. Luke stresses that this important confession took place amid Jesus' prayer. After the disciples answered that people thought Jesus was John the Baptist, or Elijah, or one of the old prophets risen again, Peter confessed, *"The Christ of God."* Luke's expression stresses that Jesus is the Christ whom God sent and established.

Comparing the expressions of the three Gospels: Mark records *"You are the Christ,"* Luke *"The Christ of God,"* and Matthew *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* The length and emphasis of the sentences differ, but the central confession is identical: Peter did not see Jesus as one of the prophets like John the Baptist or Elijah, but believed Him to be the only Christ, sent by God.

Mark records that immediately after this confession, Jesus taught plainly for the first time that He must suffer, be killed, and rise again after three days. This shows that the confession *"Christ"* must not be understood only in the sense of a political king holding worldly power. Jesus is the Christ who saves His people from their sins through suffering and sacrifice.

Christ means the Anointed One, and refers to Jesus, who fulfills all the ministries of King, High Priest, and Prophet. As King, Jesus rules over those who believe; as High Priest, He

took on all the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, then received the judgment of those sins and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed salvation; and as Prophet, He taught the will of God and the truth of salvation. Peter's confession, therefore, was not simply an answer that guessed Jesus' title correctly, but a confession of the faith that Jesus is God and the Christ who saves from sin.

To sum up the differences among the three Gospels: Mark concisely stresses the heart of the confession and the way of suffering that follows; Matthew records in detail the identity of the Son of God, the revelation of the heavenly Father, and the promise concerning the church; and Luke stresses the setting of prayer and the expression 'the Christ of God.' The three records do not collide with one another; they complement one another, showing the meaning of the same confession of faith from different points of view.

[Question] 19. Mark 8:27–28—who were people saying Jesus was?

People said Jesus was John the Baptist, or Elijah, or one of the prophets.

Seeing Jesus' words and power, they thought He was no ordinary man, but they did not know Him as the Son of God and the Christ who saves mankind from sin. Because they understood Jesus only as a great prophet or as one of God's servants, they failed to perceive fully His true identity and His saving work.

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[Question] 20. Mark 8:29—how did Peter answer Jesus' question, *"But who do you say that I am?"*

Peter answered Jesus, *"You are the Christ."*

This was not seeing Jesus as one of the prophets like John the Baptist or Elijah, but believing and confessing Him as the Christ sent by God, that is, the promised Savior.

[Question] 21. Mark 8:30—after hearing Peter's confession of faith, what did Jesus say to His disciples?

When Peter confessed, *"You are the Christ,"* Jesus strictly warned His disciples to tell no one about Him. This was a command not yet to make known to the people of that day the fact that Jesus is the Christ.

Jesus did not command silence because Peter's confession was wrong. Peter's confession was a right confession of faith that revealed Jesus' true identity. But many people of that day were expecting the Christ as a political king who would liberate Israel from Roman rule and seize worldly power. If only the fact that Jesus is the Christ were made known, people could misunderstand His mission.

The disciples, too, while confessing Jesus as the Christ, had not yet fully perceived by what method He would accomplish salvation. In the very next verse, when Jesus said that He must suffer, be killed, and rise again after three days, Peter opposed it. He knew the title Christ, but he could not yet accept the ministry of the Christ, who saves through suffering, death, and resurrection.

Jesus was not a political savior who came to gain worldly

power. Jesus is the Christ who took on all the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed salvation. Until the disciples perceived this saving work rightly, they could not fully proclaim even the fact that Jesus is the Christ.

The command of silence, therefore, did not mean never to preach the gospel; it meant to follow God's time and the order of salvation. After salvation was completed through Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples had to proclaim Jesus widely as the Christ. But at that time the disciples first had to learn the meaning of the Cross and the resurrection and throw away the worldly view of the Christ, and so He warned them to tell no one.

[Question] 22. Mark 8:31—how did Jesus speak of what He would undergo?

Jesus said that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, be killed, and rise again after three days.

This shows that Jesus did not undergo His death without foreseeing it; He knew in advance the suffering, death, and resurrection to come. In particular, the words that He must "*rise again*" reveal that Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection were not an accidental tragedy but the will and plan of God that had to be fulfilled to save mankind.

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[Question] 23. Mark 8:32—on hearing the teaching about Jesus' death and resurrection, what did the disciples do?

When Jesus spoke openly of His suffering, death, and resurrection, Peter took hold of Jesus and remonstrated with Him. To 'remonstrate' here means that he spoke as if rebuking Him, protesting that such things must not happen to Him.

Verse 32 does not record how each of all the disciples responded; it conveys the act of Peter, who stepped forward and opposed as if representing the disciples. Peter had rightly confessed Jesus as the Christ, but he did not yet understand God's plan of salvation, that the Christ must suffer and die.

With his human heart that loved Jesus and his own thought that the Christ must triumph and obtain glory, he tried to block the way of the Cross. This shows that confessing who Jesus is is not enough; one must also accept as it is the word that He accomplishes salvation through suffering, death, and resurrection.

[Question] 24. Mark 8:33—when Peter tried to stop Him, with what words did Jesus rebuke him?

Jesus turned around, looked at His disciples, and rebuked Peter, saying, *"Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

Jesus did not define Peter himself as Satan. He rebuked him so sternly because Peter, out of human affection and thinking, had tried to block Jesus' ministry of the Cross, and that thinking was in effect the same as the will of Satan, who sought to hinder God's plan of salvation.

The words *"Get behind Me"* mean that Peter must not try to decide Jesus' way with his own thinking or block His path, but return to the disciple's place and follow Jesus' word. The things of God were that Jesus would suffer and die and then rise again and accomplish the salvation of mankind, while the things of men were to avoid suffering and seek only the safety of the flesh and worldly glory.

[Question] 25. What does Mark 8:34 say the one who follows Jesus must do?

Jesus called the multitude together with His disciples and said, *"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."*

To deny oneself does not mean to hate oneself or to erase one's personality and worth. It means that when one's own thoughts, desires, and interests collide with the word of God, one does not insist that they are right, but acknowledges that God's will is right and lays down one's own will. It is the opposite attitude to Peter's, who tried to block Jesus' way of the Cross with human thinking.

To take up one's own cross does not mean bearing the judgment of one's own sins oneself or obtaining salvation through asceticism. Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in our place. The cross the believer takes up means not avoiding but accepting the sacrifice and hardship, the responsibility and service that come because one follows Jesus and the gospel. It is putting the Lord's will and the work of bringing souls to life ahead of one's own comfort and profit.

To follow Jesus is not to call Him Lord with the mouth only,

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but to live following Jesus' words and footsteps. If one keeps putting one's own thinking first, one cannot follow behind the Lord; so the believer must deny himself in every circumstance and choose the Lord's will.

However, the acts of self-denial and taking up one's cross are not a condition or merit for obtaining the remission of sins. This is the life in which the righteous person—who has already received the remission of all sins by believing the gospel Jesus accomplished—follows the Lord's will out of thankfulness to Him who saved him. Salvation is received by the grace the Lord completed, and the life after salvation appears as the sacrifice and service of denying oneself, taking up one's own cross, and following the Lord.

[Question] 26. Mark 8:35—what did Jesus say about saving one's life and losing it?

Jesus said, *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it."*

Trying to save one's own life does not mean that every act of treasuring life or avoiding danger is wrong. It refers to the attitude that, when sacrifice arises in following Jesus and the gospel, denies the Lord and abandons the gospel in order to protect one's own safety and interests. Though one seems to have kept one's life in this world, one ends up losing everlasting life.

Conversely, to lose one's life for Jesus and the gospel means laying down one's own advantage, honor, wealth, and comfort because one believes and follows the Lord, and, if necessary, not sparing even the life of the body. Such a person,

though he suffers loss or loses his life in the world, never loses the everlasting life he has received from the Lord.

This word does not mean that the act of sacrificing one's life is itself a merit for salvation. A person does not receive the remission of sins because he has been martyred or made many sacrifices; he obtains the remission of sins and everlasting life by believing the gospel Jesus completed. The person who has that faith counts Jesus and the gospel more precious than the life of this world, and so can give his life for the Lord.

Verse 35 therefore teaches the paradoxical truth that the person who abandons Jesus and the gospel to keep only his own life loses everlasting life, while the person who gives himself for Jesus and the gospel enjoys the everlasting life received from the Lord.

[Question] 27. Mark 8:36–37—what lesson did Jesus give about a man's life, which cannot be exchanged even for the whole world?

Jesus said that even if a man gains the whole world, if he loses his own life there is no profit at all, and asked what a man could give in exchange for his own life. This means that one person's life and soul are more precious than all the wealth, power, and honor of the whole world put together.

While a person is alive, he may think that gathering wealth, gaining high position, and succeeding in the world are the most important things. But in the face of death he must lay all of it down. However much one has gained in the world, if one loses one's life without obtaining the remission of sins and everlasting life, everything one has gained is of no help in saving oneself.

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Also, the words asking what a man could give in exchange for his own life mean that one cannot buy back life or escape the judgment of sin with wealth, good deeds, and religious merit. Though one owned the whole world, one could not recover a life already lost, and before God's judgment seat one has nothing to offer as the price of saving one's soul.

Therefore the most important thing for a person is not to possess much in the world, but to solve the problem of sin and obtain everlasting life while he is alive. Jesus took on all the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins, is born again, and obtains everlasting life.

The remission of sins that saves a person's life is not obtained by wealth or effort. Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in our place. Salvation, therefore, is not bought with a person's possessions and merits, but received by believing the grace Jesus completed.

This word also sets right the believer's priorities in life. That one soul hears the gospel and receives the remission of sins is more precious than gaining the whole world. The believer, therefore, must not neglect his own soul chasing only the world's success and material things, but count other people's souls also more precious than the whole world and preach the gospel of life.

[Question] 28. Mark 8:38—what result follows for the one who is ashamed of Jesus and His words in this adulterous and sinful generation?

Jesus said that whoever is ashamed of Him and His words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.

To be ashamed of Jesus and His words means hiding the fact that one believes in Jesus in order to avoid people's criticism and mockery, and denying or abandoning the Lord's words and the gospel in order to gain the world's approval. It is a solemn warning that if one refuses to acknowledge Jesus before the people of the world, He will not acknowledge that person as His own when He comes again to judge.

This does not mean that a believer is cast off at once for a single failure, a moment of fear or weakness. Peter, too, denied Jesus out of fear, but he realized his wrong, turned back, and followed the Lord again. The person rebuked here is the one who is continually ashamed of Jesus and His words and refuses the Lord to the end in order to gain people's approval.

Jesus first came to this earth in a low and humble form, but when He comes again, He comes as the Lord of judgment, in the glory of the Father and with the holy angels. Therefore the believer must not fear the appraisal of an adulterous and sinful generation, but boldly believe and confess that Jesus is his Christ and that His words are the truth of life and salvation. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The work of God, who saves the spiritually starving

< Mark 8:1-10 >

"In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.' Then His disciples answered Him, 'How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?' He asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them. So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha."

Today, through the word of the Gospel of Mark, I would like to share about the work and the blessing of God. When Jesus was on this earth, He healed many sick people, and so many

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people followed Him around. In those days there was not much to eat in the nation of Israel. It was truly very poor. Yet wherever Jesus went, many people followed.

Jesus had compassion on the hungry multitude

Looking from Mark chapter 8, verse 1, the background appears. *"In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar'" (Mark 8:1–3)*. Because Jesus healed the sick, countless people followed Him around. Thousands followed in crowds, and counting the women and children, there may have been close to ten thousand. That great multitude had been following Jesus for three days already, so they had eaten all the lunches they had brought, picked and eaten whatever fruit they could find in the fields, and now, with nothing left to eat, the people were growing faint. Jesus saw it and had compassion on them and wanted to give them something to eat. Just as He said that if He sent them away hungry to their houses they would faint on the way, Jesus knows people's circumstances well and knows all things. Though He is God, He came to this earth in a human body, so He knew that if He simply sent these people home, they would grow weak with hunger and collapse on the road.

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The one who has been hungry knows the heart of the hungry

The person who has gone hungry knows the heart of a hungry person. When you are terribly hungry, if someone gives you anything at all, you cannot be thankful enough. The person who has never been hungry stands on his pride and says, would I take such handouts?—but the person who has been hungry can understand well the heart of the hungry. In the old days, when people of our country stopped by another's house on an errand and that household happened to be eating, even if it was no proper meal, they would hold out a spoon and urge the visitor to come up and eat together. Then, for courtesy's sake, he would decline two or three times. He would demur three or four times, saying he had just eaten, that he was fine. But in those days when food was scarce, if you took the few refusals at face value and said, then we will eat by ourselves, and ate alone, it was a great discourtesy. If he did not come, you went after him, took him by the arm, pulled him back, and seated him; and if he still did not lift the spoon, you pressed it into his hand and made him eat. In truth it is evangelism that we ought to press on people like that, but in those days it was food they pressed like that. If you did not do so, the visitor was deeply hurt.

It must have been before I entered school. I believe I have told you before that once, with no one at home and nothing to eat, I was so hungry that I picked out strands of noodles from a tub of slop water and ate them. In our house we were absolutely taught never to go to another's house asking for food, and never to visit at another family's mealtime. Even when there was nothing to eat, we were to pour water into the pot and light the fire, so that from other houses they would see smoke rising from our chimney. My father held gravely to the old scholar's code of

conduct; however poor we were, he cleared his throat and went about with his attire in order, and since we learned that daily, we could not even go to a friend's house at mealtime. So after one breakfast, we went hungry all day. One day, so young and so hungry, I was walking down an alley when I saw that a house had boiled noodles and set the tub of slop water outside. Even in a child's heart there were many thoughts. I wish I could eat even that—but what if someone sees me? It is shameful. If my parents find out, I will be scolded. But I was so hungry that when no one was looking, I snatched some up and put them in my mouth. I ate it, and though my stomach was not filled, the faintness passed. I remember it to this day. To a hungry person, hunger is a great affliction. That is why Jesus, too, could not send the multitude away when they were hungry. He knew well what would happen if He just sent them off, and so He was concerned that they would faint on the way.

With seven loaves He fed four thousand, with some to spare

The disciples asked: where in this wilderness could we get bread to satisfy these people? It was out of the question. In another Gospel they asked whether even a great sum of money could feed them all. Where would one go to buy bread for so many people? It was impossible. But Jesus spoke. *"He asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude" (Mark 8:5–6)*. They were not large loaves but seven small loaves that would fit in a lunchbox. The Lord took

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them, gave thanks, and gave them to His disciples to set before the multitude, and had them eat. He blessed the few small fish as well and had them distributed. So they ate their fill, and the leftover fragments were gathered into seven large baskets, and those who had eaten, it says, were about four thousand. Four thousand—that is a great many people indeed. This event, as you have seen in the word, happened exactly as the word says.

Let us think here about the number seven. God rested on the seventh day and blessed that day. Seven speaks of the work God has done. God blesses the people of this earth with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, with the love of God, and He gave blessing enough for all to eat with plenty to spare. And the two fish speak of the church. Through God's Church, God has fed the many people of the world who are starving spiritually and physically, and has left much over. God's work has clothed those people with many blessings. This is the spiritual content of this word.

God feeds the spiritually starving through the Church

We are now steadily carrying on the literature ministry. We keep printing books and sending them out, and since our means are not ample, there are difficult parts. But I think of this: God, through God's Church, performs His work for the spiritually starving people of the whole world, feeding them so much food, feeding them to the full, and leaving some over. It is believed in my heart that He works that way through God's Church. The beginning was small, but God has done many things through His Church for the spiritually starving all over the world. It is amazing how much He has done. To people truly starving for

food He is feeding and sharing food enough and to spare. I come to believe that this is the blessing of God.

These days I am polishing the exposition of Genesis and sending it out for translation. Genesis has so much to say that a single chapter could fill several books, and every chapter is full of words that become food for the spirit. As I handle that manuscript, I feel in my heart: how good it would be if people read this and received the remission of sins; God really has His Church prepare food like this; with this food people would truly not go hungry. I come to think that in this age, through God's Church, He is feeding this food to the spiritually starving people of the whole world. I believe God is really doing amazing things through God's Church.

Whoever desires can eat the food of the spirit to the full

It says they ate their fill and seven large baskets were left over; today as well, anyone who wants to eat the food can receive it, whether as e-books or as paper books. It is only that people do not care to eat, that they have no interest; anyone who truly has interest can receive the remission of sins and eat the food of the spirit to the full—God is feeding them through His Church. For this I have a truly thankful heart before God. Long ago our Lord took seven loaves and a few small fish and fed a great multitude with some to spare; and today, through the Church—through you and me—by this world gospel preaching, that is, the Internet ministry and the paper book ministry and the e-book ministry, God is even now giving to this earth the food of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which feeds all the people of the world and still leaves more. Whoever wants to eat

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the food can keep eating without the least lack. This age has become an age when anyone who wants to eat can eat. People scattered all over the world, even people in regions where it is hard to encounter the gospel, can come to our website, receive books, download e-books, and order paper books, and can fully receive salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And even after being saved, if they truly love and long for God, they can eat the food of the spirit as much as they want. They can eat until they are full; God has laid out food and laid out blessings so that we do not go spiritually hungry as we live in this world.

Truly, I know this is the blessing of God. God has blessed this world of billions so that they may eat the food of the spirit sufficiently and eat the food of the flesh abundantly as well. He has done so astonishingly much that now no one can say he failed to receive the remission of sins because he did not know. The world turns in confusion and the struggles of power among nations do not cease, but God protects this country because God's Church, which preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is in this land. Unless God allows it, no one can do as he pleases. God has given food to the world so abundantly that now no one in all the world can come to our website, eat the food, and still say he is hungry. Food enough and to spare abounds in God's Church. Now that the e-books are posted, anyone can read them; whoever wants to eat can eat, and whoever wants to receive the remission of sins can receive it at any time—the foundation has been laid. We truly want to send more books, and the economic situation is difficult at times. Even so, God blesses us and upholds the Church, and through God's Church He has done amazing things all over the world and given amazing blessings. I thank Him that He has blessed you and me as well. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

We must fill our hearts with the grace of God

< Mark 8:1-10 >

"In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.' Then His disciples answered Him, 'How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?' He asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them. So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha."

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Jesus fed the hungry multitude to the full, with some to spare

The word we have read today is about something that happened when Jesus was on this earth in the flesh. Each Gospel records even the same content from a slightly different point of view. Matthew saw Jesus as the King of kings, Almighty God, and wrote from the standpoint of how He was born, how He would save mankind, and how He would judge; Mark saw Jesus as the Servant of God and recorded how, as that Servant, He came to this earth and dealt with people. Luke, who was a physician, wrote from the standpoint of the Savior who looks after man's weak parts, and the Apostle John went further and wrote from the standpoint of revealing that Jesus is the Almighty who rules heaven.

Looking at this passage of Mark, Jesus had compassion on the multitude. He said they had now been with Him three days, so they had been following Jesus for as long as three days. Four thousand is easy to say, but gathered in one place they are a great many people. If all four thousand gathered, they would not even fit into an ordinary playing field. Jesus said that if He sent them home hungry they would collapse on the way, and told the disciples to give them something to eat. When the disciples asked how they could possibly get food for so many, Jesus asked them how many loaves they had. They said there were seven loaves, and He had them brought, gave thanks, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples carried the bread to the multitude. And so that great multitude ate their fill, it says, and there was some left over.

The whole world is in a famine of the word

Our Lord is now preaching the gospel through us to the whole world, and there are very many people who are starving spiritually. There are great religions in the world, but they are all just religions. They are things man has made. People try to find satisfaction in those religions, to gain strength of heart and obtain everlasting life, but it does not happen. You cannot imagine how hard it is for a person who has not met the Lord. I believe it is an enormous blessing that in this age we can hear the word of God from someone who believes, believe what we have heard, and by that faith receive the remission of sins, go to the kingdom of heaven, and do God's work.

People are now in a famine. Physically, too, there are many countries where life is very hard, and even in wealthy countries there are many homeless people. In some countries, lunchboxes past their selling hours are set out in parks for the homeless to take and eat. It is so even physically, but spiritually people are in an unspeakable famine. Where can one go to hear the real word of God? To hear the word of God, the one who preaches it must be a person who knows and believes the word of God and has the Holy Spirit in his heart. If a person without the Holy Spirit preaches the word, it is not the word of God but deception. It is using the word of God as a pretext to deceive people and fill one's own pockets. I, too, was a man who preached before I was born again, and everything I preached before I was born again was empty. There was sin in the heart, and I could not remove people's sins or teach them how; all I had was: repent, believe well, be zealous. And yet it is because of sin that a person believes in Jesus.

Looking at the whole world, there are many people in famine, but you who are inside God's Church do not know it well. In the

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old days, when I taught the students of the mission school, I told them to visit the meetings of ordinary churches. Go and see what is different between the word I preach to you and the word they preach. Do they tell you the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Do they tell you how sin is in your heart? Do they tell you from the word of God how that sin is removed, that Jesus has already removed it? They cannot. Even if they wanted to, they cannot. When a person first believes in Jesus, it is good. But after believing about five years, a famine comes to his heart. After ten years his heart grates like a field of sand, and after longer than that it grows rough like a field of gravel. How tormented people must be! In the old churches of some countries there is a veneration of sacred objects: statues of saints are carved and displayed inside the chapel, and people pray to them. In other churches people go around the pictures in order, offering prayers. But though they do it until they die, sin remains in the heart and the wounds of the heart are not healed. I was once one of those people, but the Lord met me, and so I came to preach this gospel and came to meet you.

In this Bible, too, there were thousands who followed Jesus around. Why did they follow? Because they had experienced Jesus performing signs and wonders and distributing food. And if you followed Jesus there was much to see. They saw Him raise the dead, make the paralyzed rise, open the eyes of the blind, and cast out demons from the demon-possessed. So many followed—and at any rate, it says they ate this true food. The seven loaves were small loaves that would fit in a lunchbox, and the two fish would have been small salted ones. With those He gave thanks and fed that great multitude to the full.

I grew up in bitter poverty as a child. It was a neighborhood where war refugees gathered to live, and my parents had fallen into an idolatrous religion and offered up all their property,

leaving nothing to feed their children. We tied aluminum lunchboxes on our backs with string and went to school, where at lunchtime they rationed out corn porridge. When the students gathered on the playing field, a ladleful was scooped from a great porridge pot for each; I received mine in my lunchbox lid, blew on the hot porridge as I walked, ate it all up, and stood again at the end of the line to receive one more helping. When you are hungry, what is there to be ashamed of in that? The whole neighborhood lived that way. If I treasure food now, it is because I came through such times. At any rate, this multitude ate their fill. And now it is we who are distributing the food.

Our hearts are beautiful when filled with the grace of God

In Hebrews chapter 13 there is the word, *"It is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods" (Hebrews 13:9)*. Our hearts are beautiful when filled with the grace of God. That God loved us and removed our sins with the water, the blood, and the Spirit; that He made us God's children; that He made us His workers; that He hears our prayers; that He takes us to the kingdom of heaven—when we hold in our hearts these things God has done, the hearts of us the righteous become rich. On the contrary, if we try to satisfy our hearts with making much money and becoming something, the heart becomes utterly desolate. It means that when the heart goes wrong and turns toward material things, the thankful heart before God disappears. We must remember at all times: how much God loved you and me, each one; how He removed our sins; how thankful it is that we have no sin; how thankful it is that He made us God's children; how thankful it is that He made us God's workers. To become a child

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of God is harder than picking a star from the sky. In some groups, they go through a tract, asking and answering, and if you repeat the final prayer, they say you have received Jesus and become a child of God. But one cannot become a child of God by such things. A person with sin in his heart is not a child of God.

We must chew over the grace we have received and give thanks

To keep calling to mind the gifts and blessings God has given us is what is beautiful and satisfying. We are not to rejoice over becoming something in the flesh. When a righteous person goes wrong, it is invariably because he tried to find satisfaction in food. What is coming back to me right now; is my future guaranteed or not—thinking this way, there is no satisfaction. The hearts of the righteous are to be filled with the grace of God. It is to keep chewing it over in the heart. Animals that part the hoof and chew the cud, like sheep and oxen, have several stomachs. When they eat, they chew roughly and store it in the first stomach, then bring it up again and chew it thoroughly and swallow. In the same way, after we are saved and have heard the word of God, if we draw that good thing up again, chew it over, and swallow it, it becomes the food of our hearts and becomes thanksgiving. If you hope to fill the heart with material things, there is no end. Gather one hundred million and you want two hundred million; gather two hundred million and you want five hundred million; then a billion—greed has no limit whatever. And then it all collapses at once. So I know the heart must be filled with the grace of God.

Many people all over the world are now in famine, and through the literature and the booklets and the e-books we send,

they are gaining fullness of heart. As the multitude in Jesus' day tasted the miracle of eating bread to the full, so now those people are eating the food of the spirit and being filled through the word of God we deliver—this we must think of in our hearts. We must be thankful in heart. We must be thankful that through this work we support and deliver, all the people of the world are receiving food. How is this possible? It is possible because God is God; possible because we believe in God; possible because we chew over God's grace in our hearts; and because we do for Him the gospel preaching He commanded, the literature ministry, the people of the world receive the remission of sins and there is true thanksgiving in our hearts as well.

The church is not something anyone can be. Only the person whose heart is right in God's sight becomes the church. Receiving the remission of sins does not by itself make it so. If one is sunk in the greed of the flesh, one cannot. We must thank God from the heart for the grace of making us His workers and sharers of the food of life. When we think of God's grace: He saved us, He let us serve the gospel, He made us God's children, and when we live like this and go, we go to the kingdom of heaven. What an amazing gift and what a great blessing that is! Yet there are many who, having received the remission of sins, do not serve the gospel, or cannot. We must fill our hearts full with the grace of God; if instead of grace we try to fill them with the material things of the world, we become those who forsake and oppose God, and we end up turning our backs on God.

Here is the difference between David and Solomon. David suffered much even after meeting the Lord. But he always kept in his heart the grace the Lord had bestowed, and until he finished his life he gave thanks and prayed and lived doing what God wanted. He was a man who ended his life in thanksgiving. Solomon at first gave thanks and thought on God's grace, but

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after a while he filled his heart with foreign women, filled it with material things, filled it with power, filled it with foreign gods. Because he left God, the people of Israel after Solomon's day all entered into a curse. This tells us much. Even if we have received salvation, if we chase after material things or the world or power and try to fill our hearts with such things, we end up like Solomon. When we meet the Lord and, though it is hard and difficult, delight to do the things the Lord bids, and follow the Lord always chewing over in our hearts the salvation God gave us and the love and blessings and gifts He has bestowed besides, we experience the Lord filling us with many blessings. We must fill the heart with the grace of God. When we keep chewing over in our hearts, until the day the Lord comes, what the Lord has done for me and what grace I have received, we receive more grace and blessing, and we live well, rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, and giving thanks in everything.

God supplies what His Church needs

Let us look at verses 7 and 8. *"They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them. So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments" (Mark 8:7–8)*. The few fish speak of God's Church, and if you are with God's Church, there is a feast every day. Sinners who chase material things have no feast except a sixtieth-birthday feast, a seventieth-birthday feast, a few birthday parties, a first-birthday feast, and then life is over. But look at us the righteous: we feast because it is someone's birthday, we feast on another's birthday that is not our own, and we pull in any occasion at all to gather and eat together. That is feasting. It is possible because we are the righteous. Sinners

calculate to the last penny even over buying or being bought a single meal, but we have nothing of the sort. Whoever pays, your money and my money are all the same, and the righteous feast daily. We feast in heart and we feast in body as well.

If you are in the church, the Lord blesses. It says they gathered the leftovers, filling seven large baskets. Seven is God's number, and it means God's blessing is always with the church. Even if at times there is no work, it does not matter. At such times we must pray. Zeal without faith is useless; we must pray until God gives. In the old days, when we went to the mission school, we usually prayed two or three hours. When fifteen or so sat around and prayed one by one in turn, two or three hours would pass; we would sing praises for an hour, and sermons, too, usually ran two hours. These days everyone would find a two-hour sermon hard—but you have heard the gospel in full, so there is no need to do that now.

God's Church is rich. God blesses it. When there is something truly needed for the gospel, I hold it in my heart and pray. And God has given it all. In fact, when there is much money there are many worries. You have to guard it and raise its value, and it is a headache. But what is truly necessary, we must have. So it is with this chapel. Long ago we had to move the chapel, but with the money we had it was hopeless and there was no suitable building; one day, as a spring rain drizzled down, I went here and there until I was so worn out that I prayed. God, what is this? It is not as if I am seeking to live well myself, is it? The chapel must be moved. If I am God's servant, hear my prayer. Give us a chapel. I will not wrap that house up and carry it away with me. When I prayed like that—as you well know—the original owner of this building came and told us to use this house, and so we have been in this chapel. It is very good not to have to move about. We are here because God blessed us. This

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building was originally a warehouse and is not worth much money, but God gave it. Even these chairs in the chapel were bought very cheaply when a neighboring hall was going to discard them, and the churches across the country divided them up and use them. God supplies the things that are needed. It is not that we prosper by our own devices and are ruined when we fail. We do our utmost in what we can do, and whether it prospers or not rests with God, and God supplies. I have lived until now experiencing God supply everything the church needs. So I am never discouraged.

Grace and blessing grow as they are shared

And we must not set up our own righteousness. We must not insist that only our own thinking is right. What God hates most is asserting one's own rightness. If we have skills, we must share them. There is an old story of a straw-shoe seller. The straw shoes the father wove sold well, but those the son wove did not. Only as the father was leaving this world did he give the secret in one last word: "the fuzz." When you weave straw shoes, fine wisps of straw stand up on the inside; ordinary people trimmed them all off neatly before selling, but the father cut away only the large ones and left the fine fuzz, so his shoes were more comfortable and sold well. He had withheld the skill all along and left one word only at death's door. I hope we will not be like that. Among the workers of the churches across the country, too, there are cases where they do not share their skills with one another, or will not accept them even when offered—and that must not be. Accept what others say: if someone says, I tried it this way and it was very good, then talk it over concretely; if words are not enough, bring the actual thing and try it; try it once

or twice even if it is hard, learn it, and if it is good, share it all together—how good that would be! Refusing to teach is also theft. What you know, you know because God gave you wisdom, so you must teach it. Blessing grows as it is divided. Joy also grows as it is shared, and sorrow grows lighter when shared.

God blesses God's Church. We must chew over again in our hearts the graces God has bestowed until now. It is good that the heart be established by grace. We must think again and again on the grace of God, and thank and thank Him, and live so daily. Then the people of the whole world receive the food of God through us and live well. Truly, if someone had given me just one book like this in the old days, I would not have gone through such bitter suffering. When there was sin in my heart, I fasted and went without meals, crying out to God to remove my sin, and it was so very hard. You may not know that pain. We are those who share out grace. We are those who share out the gift of God. God removed our sins with the water, the blood, and the Spirit—that is, Jesus received our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, was judged shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again, and so removed them—this is the gift of God. That Jesus came to this earth is the gift God the Father gave us. Since by believing in Him we have met God, received the remission of sins, and become God's workers, now we too share out the gift of God. We bestow grace on them and give them the gift. Then they also receive God's grace and believe, and come to have the gospel by which the heart becomes beautiful with grace.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy to keep the beautiful thing committed to him. That beautiful thing is precisely the grace God has given—the salvation, the faith, the gift, and His making us workers. Keep it, he says. I give true thanks before the Lord. We live today by the grace of God and we will live tomorrow by

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the grace of God. It is not that things go as we will because we toil until our tongues hang out. If man gained in proportion to all his effort, no one in this world would be ruined. Everyone works hard, and still lives are ruined. But there is one kind of person who is not ruined: the righteous. And among the righteous, those who stay in God's Church, chewing over grace and doing this work of sharing out grace, are not ruined. Because God's blessing is upon them, He bestows grace daily, moment by moment, giving and giving again. We are those who live by grace.

Now is truly an age of famine. God said through the prophet Amos, *"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD" (Amos 8:11)*. In this world there are so many who claim to preach the word of God. But because it is not the word of God, however much people believe and however faithfully they serve, grace does not fill them. That you and I have been saved is a gift. Because it is a gift, one can fail to know its preciousness, and one can even cast it away after receiving some other gift. That must not be. It would be disastrous. The gift God has given us is precious. Let us keep it well in our hearts, and live today by the grace of God, and live well tomorrow by the grace of God. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Let us strive to share the Bread of life with the souls of the whole world

< Mark 8:1-21 >

"In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.' Then His disciples answered Him, 'How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?' He asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them. So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha. Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, 'Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say

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to you, no sign shall be given to this generation.' And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side. Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. Then He charged them, saying, 'Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'It is because we have no bread.' But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?' They said to Him, 'Twelve.' 'Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He said to them, 'How is it you do not understand?'"

I would like to share the word with the passage we have just read. When Jesus was on this earth, He performed many signs and wonders, and so many people followed Him around. Among those who followed were also the sick. The Lord healed the deaf and healed the blind, and besides that, there was something Jesus owed it to those who followed Him to do, humanly speaking. What was it? It was to serve them a meal. Thousands of people had gathered in the fields following Jesus, and they had to be given a meal. They were people who followed Jesus because they loved Him, and they had been in the fields following Him for three days. They had eaten all the lunches they had brought and had nothing left, and the road home was too far to travel hungry. So the Lord took pity on them and told His disciples that

He wished to give them something to eat.

Jesus fed four thousand with seven loaves

At that the disciples said: what kind of word is that? There are as many as four thousand people gathered here; to feed them all, even all the bread from every bakery in town would not be enough; it cannot be done. But Jesus asked the disciples how many loaves they had, and they said there were seven. Then He said, bring those loaves to Me, and Jesus, who is God, gave thanks over that bread. When the Lord blessed it—whether the bread suddenly piled up like a mountain or kept coming out of the baskets, we do not know—at any rate four thousand ate, and seven large baskets were left over. When Jesus had performed this miracle, the Pharisees who heard the news came out to Him and asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. They wanted a miracle like fire falling from heaven. But Jesus knew their hearts and did not perform signs and wonders before them.

The disciples did not perceive Jesus, the Bread of life

Then, as Jesus crossed by boat to another region, the disciples—thinking that bread always appeared of itself if they followed Jesus—did not pack even one of the seven large baskets of leftover bread. They should have brought at least one basket to eat in the boat, but they did not. So the disciples reasoned with one another that they had no bread in the boat. *"But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, 'Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor*

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understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?' They said to Him, 'Twelve.' 'Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He said to them, 'How is it you do not understand?'" (Mark 8:17–21). Jesus was saying to His disciples: are you troubled over that fleshly bread? Have you so little perception? Do you not know why I performed these signs and wonders?

Jesus sacrificed His own self so that people would receive the remission of sins and obtain new life. He gave His own self like this to make us God's children and to give us the blessing of entering and living in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus, who is God, came to this earth to save sinners from sin. Jesus wanted people to recognize who He was; He wanted people to recognize and believe in Him, the Bread of life; but people did not know it. Even His own disciples murmured over whether the bread had been brought or not—why did you not bring some? And what were you doing yourself, that you talk?—quarreling with one another.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the Bread of life, enough for the whole world and more

Through the event of this passage there is something I want to say to you, and to myself as well. We are now preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. Those who believe this gospel with the heart eat the Bread of life and receive the remission of sins and everlasting life. I believe they eat very

amply and there is still more left. The gospel of the water and the Spirit we preach is not fleshly bread, but it is the bread of the spirit, and I believe all the people of this world can eat it and there is still more left. As Jesus fed four thousand with seven loaves and seven large baskets were left over, so I believe this gospel we preach amply feeds all the people of the whole world and still remains. We are now delivering the gospel of the water and the Spirit by e-book and by paper book, and through these works all the people of the world can eat the Bread of life, the food of the spirit, receive the remission of sins, never thirst again, and live well forever.

The Pharisees wanted Him to show signs and wonders coming down from heaven, but Jesus saw the wickedness of their hearts and did not show them a miracle. In truth, the greatest work Jesus did when He came to this earth was giving His own body for our sins. That is, He received baptism from John the Baptist and so received our sins passed on to His own body, was crucified, and rose from the dead. His giving us His flesh and blood like this so that we obtain new life—there is no Bread of life more precious than this, no miracle greater than this. The Pharisees longed for visible signs, but Jesus speaks of the Bread of life. And to the disciples who looked only at the things of the flesh, He said, do you still have no perception? In John chapter 6 Jesus said: I am the bread of life; he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has everlasting life. Jesus spoke of this continually, and He also gave bread that could be eaten physically. But people kept wanting Jesus only to solve the problems of the flesh. Even so, as He said to the Syro-Phoenician woman, for this saying go your way, the person who truly knows himself rightly before God and wants to receive grace before God receives that grace. I believe we too will be so.

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It is the content of the gospel, not the elegance of sentences, that gives people life

This gospel of the water and the Spirit we are preaching is enough for all the people of the world to eat without lack. It is ample. But people say: if you polish the sentences smooth and wrap it beautifully, would the gospel not spread better? It does seem that might help. But it is said that Greeks seek wisdom and Jews seek signs and wonders. What people seek is a book of beautiful sentences adorned with fine phrases, not this word of truth that Jesus received baptism from John and carried away all our sins. When people read a book, they want sentences that stroke the feelings softly and keep the heart from being bored. If we can do that, well and good. But when we look at the booklets we have delivered to the whole world, people all over the world have come to know and believe Jesus as the Savior and received the remission of sins, and the books have become food for their souls so that they thirst no more. In the work of being the Bread of life and food, this book of ours lacks nothing at all.

In fact, adorning the word beautifully does not plant it accurately in the heart as faith. If you write it like a novel, filled with feeling, it is pleasant to read, but when it is translated into the language of another country, that beautiful expression is never easily carried over the same. Much of it gets shaved away. I sent the sermons on the four Gospels to translation mostly as they were, without much revision. Why did I do that? God gave my heart a spiritual heart toward souls and I preached accordingly, and I sent out those sermons as they were. And those sermons have been translated into the languages of the world and are held and read in people's hands.

And now I am preaching and translating the word of Ephesians. The word of Ephesians looks simple, but it is a word

that records with great compactness the life of the saints. If one handled only the shell, like the people of the world, one could turn out a book a day, but it is not such a simple word. Within Ephesians are recorded, compactly, the economy and providence of God, the gospel, faith, God's Church, the life of us saints—the whole of the word. It is a pastoral epistle that tells us saints how to stand against Satan the Devil, the Antichrist. So this epistle must not be handled only literally; to know this word rightly and, by believing, make it flesh and blood to us, many parts must be treated again with close care. That is why I sent out what I had preached long ago, then recalled it, and am revising it and entrusting it for translation.

As I revised, this thought came to me. If I revise it like this and make it a book, the reader will be comfortable and the translator's work will be easy. But if I do this, much of the spiritual meaning contained in the preaching gets shaved away. To make one sentence smooth, the spiritual is shaved off. To keep both alive would take enormous power of writing—if Shakespeare were alive in this age, even he could not satisfy both equally. When the spiritual is alive in the sentences, the reading is rough and you keep catching on things. Yet after reading it all, what you gain is greater. Conversely, a sermon book whose sentences flow smoothly is pleasant while you read, but after you have read it, nothing remains. Since we do not have the ability to satisfy both, we must decide which way to go. I chose the spiritual content.

Until now I have preached the word on God's salvation in many areas. I did Romans, and the Tabernacle, and in Galatians I dealt with repentance and sanctification and the theological problems. The gospel of the water and the Spirit has been dealt with in all these books. So there are even the same sermons placed in several books. It is so that whichever book one reads,

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one can hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Not everyone can read dozens of books, so people look at the title and order and read; but whatever the title, if they read our booklet they hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so all who are to receive the remission of sins receive it, and it is sufficient as the food of the spirit too. In technical respects there are lacking parts, but it is sufficient both for receiving the remission of sins and as the food of the spirit. Through these booklets, if one knows and believes the Lord's will, one amply receives salvation, and by this book one gains the food of the spirit until one dies. And if one only serves the Lord, there is never any want.

We live eating the Bread of life daily

Jesus said He is the Bread of life. Then do you and I eat the Bread of life daily, or not? We do. We eat the Bread of life not only when we hear the gospel but daily, moment by moment. What do you do whenever you are lacking and do wrong? You eat the Bread of life. The Lord took on all the sins of this world—all my sins—by receiving baptism from John, and was judged on the Cross; therefore I have received salvation before God; God has saved me like this with the water and the Spirit; therefore I have no sin; I am righteous—chewing that over in faith. That is eating the Bread of life. Not only when we hear preaching: whenever we are spiritually hungry, whenever our self-righteousness is broken, whenever our lack is exposed, we chew over in faith that Bread of life with which Jesus saved you and me. Eating the Bread of life daily like this, we have lived until now and will live on. I too eat the Bread of life daily. Not only we, but anyone anywhere in the world who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit eats the Bread of life amply

and obtains everlasting life.

A brother abroad, who used to help well with translation, knew English well, and entering Internet chat rooms to talk with foreigners, he was much wounded, he says. Some people despise you if you do not write smooth, polished sentences. However well he tried, he was always looked down on. But from which language groups do the most testimonies of salvation come? They come most from Spanish speakers and Portuguese speakers. Those people also unite well in heart and do the most work. Salvation does not come from priding oneself on elegant sentences. In the old days, when our house ran a prayer retreat, many foreign missionaries came, and when such people came I would ask them once to speak at the evening service. It was not that their speech was halting—there was simply no content in the preaching. It was preaching of the outer shell. And yet I saw such people receive the most lavish honor, with pastors and missionaries trailing after them. That is why, whatever anyone says, we do the work in our own way. I absolutely do not think that people receive the remission of sins well only if we make the sentences learned and smooth. We have our own way in God. As long as I am here—and even when I am gone—this work must be done this way. If we imitate the polished writing of the people of the world, do you think they will look up to us? Never. They will see it as just worldly writing.

The books we deliver lack nothing wherever they are put

Many people all over the world are now ordering and reading our booklets. Do you suppose that because our books are rough in sentence and plain in style, people fail to eat the food of life

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and fail to receive the remission of sins? Never. On the contrary, the first books were deliberately kept simple, without difficult words. If you quote difficult classical idioms and sayings, most people cannot even read them, and even if they read them, they do not know what they mean. If you translate proverbs into another country's language, will the people of that country understand them? They will not. From then on it becomes a strange book.

The Lord gave His own body to us and let us obtain everlasting life. In the same way we are now doing the literature ministry and the e-book ministry, and through this work the people of the whole world eat the Bread of life with plenty to spare. People not only receive salvation; they can also fight the spiritual fight, and reading our booklets they can eat the food of life and grow as much as they will. In the past half year, 410,000 of our books went out. You may think of it as having delivered the gospel of the water and the Spirit to 410,000 people. But will each single book stay with only one person? Thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold—this gospel is passed on to more people than can be counted. Amply, many people receive salvation. Read Romans and it is the gospel; read Galatians and it is the gospel; read the Tabernacle book and it is the gospel; whatever book you read, the gospel is written there. Open any chapter and there is the gospel. Why is that? Because whoever reads these books, one thing must without fail remain: that Jesus removed all your sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that the Lord received baptism from John and took on all our sins, was judged on the Cross, and rose again, and so removed our sins completely. If only this remains, the purpose for which we gave that book has been achieved.

When we first did overseas mission, it was very hard. At first we sent our books to a large bookstore abroad, and though they

were to give an answer whether they would take them or not, they said to call back in a month. So I said, call them after two weeks. Our worker said that was not how it was done, but I told him to call anyway. Why? Because our books are absolutely not wrong books. We later learned that they had taken our books, put them in a warehouse without even reading them, and sent an answer to the effect that the content was good but they would decline. If you wait a month, it is already far too late. There is no reason to bow to a rejection made without even reading. Then which bookstore is bigger than that one? Send our books there. Our books are absolutely not books to be despised—let the learned come out and read them. And so we placed our books in the largest Internet bookstore in the world. Our books do not sell in great numbers there now, but they were accepted.

Our books are books that lack nothing wherever they are put. They are not shameful books that cannot be laid before theologians. When we first released our books in a certain country, we sent them out with 'the master of the gospel of the water and the Spirit' written on the cover. And the bookstore of that country said they would take them if we removed just that cover. Since the aim is to have people read them, I said do so. But it is not only I—we are all masters of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Anyone can talk about the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but the only people in the whole world with the ability to refute the words of its adversaries and prove that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth are we. Do you know how many adversaries in this world refute it? We stand against such people not with fists but with the word of God, as much as need be, and we win, as much as need be. Why? Because the Lord has won, we too, holding that word, win. The work we do is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of. These books we send to the people of the whole world make the reader amply receive

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salvation and amply eat the Bread of life. If someone is needed for this gospel of the water and the Spirit to be well spread, then even if that person despises me, I will go before him, kneel, and ask him.

Let us preach the gospel in eternal youth until the day the Lord comes

In the past half year we have shared 410,000 books with the people of the world. I want God to let us share still more. Is this gospel preaching of ours wrong? Is the method of preaching wrong? We are doing well right now. And if someone asks why so few testimonies of salvation come, does a seed sprout the moment you sow it? Does a farmer sow seed and reap fruit at once? We must now sow the seed diligently. Then, believing that God will not let what we do be in vain, I pray so. It is because God has given us wisdom that we are doing this work. Each of you must faithfully bear the work the Lord has entrusted to you. If you are to do your own work faithfully, you cannot meddle in another's work, and you cannot say another is doing his work badly. Frankly, it is hard enough to bear one's own charge well.

These days scientists say that in a few years the sea level will rise by meters. They say the warming will worsen and the change of climate will worsen; since that is reality, we must accept it. Then what must we do? We must pray to the Lord, and we must work diligently, even by the methods we have used until now. I want the Lord to bless us to do more. I feel we must do more. Yet it is not that the work gets done just because the flesh strains itself to death. It is done as God gives wisdom and understanding. When we believe, obey, and follow just as God gives, God lets us gain much with little labor. If we need more

means, the Lord will give more; if health is needed, He will give health.

As age comes, the flesh declines; but happily, the time of the Lord's coming is all but here. The body wears out, but the heart is in its youth. Our way of thinking has not aged, and spiritually we are young. Let us all, as eternal youths, live toward the gospel until the last moment, until the day the Lord comes. However old we grow and however weak the body, spiritually we are young. The Lord's coming is at hand and the world is breaking down—what more is there to regret? If the Lord were not coming, the passing years would be a sorrow, but since they say the end of the world is near, there is rather hope. If we serve the gospel just a little longer, the gospel will be preached to the whole world and the end of this world will also come. If the sea level rises further, many countries will have their land sink under the sea, and the cities on the coasts will go under water. Then the gospel can no longer be preached. Now, if we deliver the gospel just a little more, destruction will come to this world and our flesh, too, may meet death. Even so, will the Lord raise us again, or not? He will raise us. I wait for that day to come. Is there anyone among you who is ill? Endure just a little longer. We will preach the gospel until that day. Let us all gather our strength and, without despairing, take up the challenge to preach the gospel. We must pray to God that this preaching of the gospel may be accomplished faster than the natural calamities of this world. Let us all pray that God will uphold us and bless us. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The faith by which one is born again

< Mark 8:22-26 >

"Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, 'I see men like trees, walking.' Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. Then He sent him away to his house, saying, 'Neither go into the town, nor tell anyone in the town.'"

Man must be born again of water and the Spirit

The Scriptures speak of a person being born a second time, that is, being born again. Being born again is exceedingly important. This is the purpose for which God gave us the Scriptures. The Scriptures say much about the way to be born again, and they say that everyone must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21)*. Only the one who does the will of God enters the kingdom of heaven. God sent His Son Jesus to this earth so that anyone who only believes

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in Jesus can be born again. In John chapter 3, Jesus said to Nicodemus, who came to Him by night, that unless a person is born again, no one can enter the kingdom of God. Every person must be born again of the word of God, of water and the Spirit.

You know the cicada well. The cicada lives for a long time underground as a grub. It differs by species, but usually it lives underground six or seven years, and some cicadas live underground as grubs for seventeen years. This grub, which lives long in the dark earth without knowing light, comes out and becomes a beautiful cicada. That a grub changes and becomes a cicada is a truly marvelous thing. It has become an entirely different being. God made such a phenomenon in nature to let us perceive the secret of being born again. We humans, too, must be born again like that, as beings of an entirely different dimension.

As the grub lives in the dark earth, so all people live in sin. Man is one who is born with sin and commits sin until he dies. David confessed in Psalm 51, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)*. All people are descendants of Adam. Because the first man, our forefather Adam, sinned, all people came to be born with sin. Born in darkness, born in sin, we live in a body that can only sin until we die. So the person who has sin can never enter the kingdom of God. Into the kingdom of God one can never enter with even a little sin. Conversely, if there is even a little sin in the heart, there is no way whatever to escape the fire of hell. Jesus, too, said that one will by no means get out of there till one has paid the price of sin in full. This is God's law. Romans also says, *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23)—the price of sin is hell. So everyone who has sin in his heart must without fail be born again. The person with sin in his heart is like this grub. If you believe in Jesus but have sin in your heart, you are one

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who has not yet been born again, and you must be born again of water and the Spirit. So the Lord wants to teach us through today's word how one is born again.

The faith by which one is born again is faith that believes the word

Could the blind man open his own eyes by his own strength? Never. In the same way, the person with sin in his heart can never cast off his sin by his own strength. As the blind man's eyes were opened when he met Jesus Christ, so we too can be born again only when we meet Jesus Christ. Only by meeting Him and believing what He has done for us can we be born again. Is there anyone who has believed in Jesus until now and yet has sin in his heart? Then I believe God will wash your sins away clean as you hear today's word. As that blind man opened his eyes on that day, I believe that if you only hear the word and believe, your sins too will be washed away clean. The word of God is living and powerful. God is the God of the word, the God who speaks and without fail fulfills.

Reading the beginning of Hebrews chapter 1, it records that God, who in former times spoke through the prophets in various ways and in various parts, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son. The first thing we must believe is that the word of God is the truth. The Gospel of John says that the word of God is God Himself, and the One who came as the word become flesh is Jesus Christ. And Hebrews says that God made heaven and earth by this word and upholds heaven and earth by it. That you and I breathe today is also because we are kept by the word of God. And one thing more: Hebrews 1:3 records that God by His word did the work of removing sins altogether. The one who knows

and believes that word comes to be born again.

To be born again, we must leave the town of our own thinking

First, to be born again, we must leave our own town like this blind man. To receive the word of God's truth without any hindrance, we must get out of our own town, that is, out of our own thinking. People all form their own towns and live in them. A man knows his own town so well that he can find his way by feel with his eyes shut. He knows with his eyes closed that past so-and-so's house comes an alley, and around the corner comes such-and-such a shop. One's own town is a place where even a blind man can get along. In the same way, sinners who have not yet received the remission of sins, who have not been born again, are living in the town of their own thinking. As we live, we take in various kinds of knowledge and doctrines and values and build the town of our own thinking, and we live familiarly in that town. So to be born again, one must without fail leave the town of one's own thinking. It is because the words within the values a man has made familiar to himself are different from the word of God.

Satan the Devil made the first man eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He taught a lie to make man leave the word of God's truth. After eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve came to hold standards of good and evil different from God's. So the book of Isaiah says that people call evil good and good evil. Human beings came to hold standards opposite to God's. So the town a man has built cannot fit the word of God. If there is still sin in your heart, you must without fail get out of your own town. To

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open this blind man's eyes, the first thing Jesus did was lead him out of the town. If I have believed all this time and yet have sin, that method is wrong. You must get out of that town of wrong belief. You must lay down your own thinking.

General Naaman, who appears in 2 Kings chapter 5, was a leper. To be healed he tried every method. But when he went before Elisha, the servant of God, he thought in his own mind that Elisha would come out, wave his hand, and pray for him. Yet Elisha sent a servant boy and delivered only the word of God: go to the Jordan and dip your body seven times, and your flesh shall be restored clean like a little child's. To General Naaman's thinking it made no sense at all. This word did not fit the town of his own thinking. Naaman was a high general of a powerful nation, and he grew angry: in our country there are many rivers larger and clearer than the Jordan; would it not be better to bathe in our rivers than to go into this muddy Jordan water? And he raged. In our thoughts, too, there is much of that kind. We think that if we go to a church with a longer history and more members, we might be born again there. But however large the church and however many the members, one is born again only by doing as the word of God says.

Then General Naaman's servants dissuaded him. General, if Elisha had told you to do some very difficult thing, would you not have done it? He is simply telling you to believe the word of God—why will you not do it? So General Naaman changed his mind, went to the Jordan, believed that word, and dipped his body seven times. Dipping the body seven times in the water was not human effort or merit. It was simply believing the word. Was General Naaman's leprosy healed, or not? It was healed, his flesh restored clean like the flesh of a little child. Leprosy is the disease of sin. The way our leprosy-like sin can be healed clean is the same. Sin is not removed by doing many works,

much service, much asceticism and discipline. In the book of Jeremiah He said, *"For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, Yet your iniquity is marked before Me" (Jeremiah 2:22)*. A person's sins are washed clean only when he believes the word of the baptism of the remission of sins.

Until now we may have thought that we should not sin, and that if we do sin, we must diligently offer prayers of repentance and pay the price of sin zealously, and only so will we go to the kingdom of heaven. We may have thought we go to heaven only by living virtuously and keeping God's Law diligently. But we must lay that thinking down. We must get out of that town of thinking. Having done so all this time, has your sin disappeared? Has the sin of the heart not remained just as it was? Then you must get out quickly. By that method one cannot enter the kingdom of God. We must meet and believe the word of God that causes us to be born again. As General Naaman was healed clean because he believed the word of God that Elisha delivered, so you too can be born again clean when you believe this word of God. We must lay down our own thinking, hear the word of God, and hold it fast by faith. To go to the kingdom of heaven, we must be without sin. The Lord is teaching us the way that sin disappears.

In the Scriptures, the blind man refers spiritually to the sinner who has sin. That this sinner opened his eyes refers to being born again. It means the sinner met the word of Jesus and by believing became a righteous person. This is called being born again. A person must be born again. When born of one's mother, one is born a sinner, but by the word of God the inner man is changed and one becomes righteous. To be born again, one must have faith that believes two things. First, Jesus spit on this blind man's eyes. Second, Jesus laid His hands on the blind man and made his eyes open. One must have these two faiths. Is it not strange?

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If Jesus meant to open his eyes, He could have done it more neatly and pleasantly—why did He spit? Elsewhere it says Jesus spat and kneaded clay and anointed a man's eyes with it. Why did He do so? The Scriptures never record anything useless. The word of God is spirit and life, and He says that though heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle of the Scriptures will pass away. They contain profound truths.

Saliva speaks of judgment and curse

Saliva speaks of judgment and curse. People spit when they curse and revile someone. Thus saliva represents judgment and curse. The first thing you and I must know is that we are those who can only receive the judgment and curse of God. We must believe by the word that I am one who must go to hell. We must have the faith that acknowledges before God that I am one with much sin. The person who does not believe that he is one bound for hell can never be born again. The Pharisees did not believe they were bound for hell. So they met Jesus and yet were not born again. The only people who met Jesus and were born again were those who acknowledged before the word that they were sinners bound for hell. That is the meaning of the word that the healthy have no need of a physician, but the sick do. Our Lord meets the person who acknowledges himself before God: I have much sin, and I am one bound for hell.

Is there anyone among you who acknowledges, I am one bound for hell? God is very pleased with the person who acknowledges it. Even if you were too ashamed to reveal it, if you acknowledged it inwardly, it is so. The person who has sin in his heart—the sinner—must without fail acknowledge it so. To such a person God gives the word of power that makes sin

cease to be. It cannot be that one is not yet born again and still says he will not go to hell. Such a person is one who has not yet left the town of his own thinking. God blessed Abraham and told him, get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house (Genesis 12:1). Abraham left his country, his family, and his father's house—the town of his own thinking—and following only the word, he at last received great blessing. Blessed is the one who acknowledges before the word of God: I have sin; I am going to hell. Jesus said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3)*. The heart that acknowledges before God, I have sin and am one bound for hell—that is the poor heart of spirit.

The laying on of hands speaks of the passing of sin

Then let those who have acknowledged that there is sin in their hearts hear the second word, the part where Jesus laid His hands on him. Jesus laid His hands on the blind man's eyes. The eyes speak of the heart. He said the eye is the lamp of the body. The word of God speaks to our hearts. First, His spitting on the eyes was His saying: there is sin in your heart, so you are going to hell. Second, He tells us how He solved the problem of the sin in that heart. This word—to lay on hands—is a very important word in the Scriptures.

In the days of the Old Testament, God appointed the law of the sacrifice of the remission of sins, by which sins were washed clean. The sin of the heart cannot be removed by any human method. Does the sin of the heart disappear if you offer prayers of repentance? Satan the Devil teaches so, but actually try prayers of repentance—sin never disappears. In the word of God there is no such word. In the word of God it says only, *"For the*

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life of the flesh is in the blood," and, *"it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11)*. Sin passed to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, and atonement was made as that offering was judged, shedding its blood. In the same way, all our sins were passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John, and they were removed completely when Jesus was judged, shedding His blood on the Cross. It is not prayers of repentance that remove sin. God pitied us people, who would go to hell because of sin, and gave the way to cast off sin, to receive the remission of sins. Because I have sin, I must be judged and go to hell; but God appointed the law of laying hands on a lamb without blemish and passing the sin to that lamb. If you read the word of Leviticus, there are many laws of laying hands on the lamb and passing sin to it.

For a person to receive the remission of sins, first there must be a lamb without blemish. An ox or a goat will also do, but let us speak of the lamb as representative. Second, on that lamb's head the person who has sin must lay his hands. This word, the laying on of hands, means that sin passes over. God loved us, and appointed the law that the sin in our hearts, which must be judged, be passed to the lamb through the laying on of hands. And third, in my place, where I ought to be judged, He had that lamb be judged instead, shedding its blood and dying. Thus He made the way to receive the remission of sins. What I want to stress is the word that sin passes over through the laying on of hands. Let us confirm just one place in the Scriptures—the word of the great Day of Atonement. *"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man"*

(Leviticus 16:21). When he laid his hands on the goat's head, does it say all the sins of the people of Israel passed over, or not? They passed over. The laying on of hands means that sin passes over. It was also through this laying on of hands that God made you and me clean from all sins.

Jesus received baptism from John and took over the sin of the world

Hebrews 10:10 says, *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10)*. Jesus is the Lamb of God who came to take on the sins of every person in this world and to die. Jesus was God who came clothed in flesh about two thousand years ago. Jesus became a man and came in order to take over all your sins and mine. Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13–15). Because John the Baptist was a descendant of Aaron, he was qualified, as the high priest of Israel, to pass on sin—just as Aaron, representing the people of Israel, passed a year's sins to the goat. And John the Baptist is the greatest of those born of women (Matthew 11:11). He is the representative of all mankind, of every person. He is your representative and mine. That John the Baptist, at the Jordan River, gave baptism to Jesus in the form of laying his hands on Him. This laying on of hands and baptism have the same meaning in the original language. Jesus received baptism in the form of the laying on of hands. Then if John the Baptist, the representative of all people, laid his hands on Jesus, did the sins of all people pass over, or not? They passed over. Though it may be beyond understanding in my own thinking, if we get out of our own thinking, and the word of God says it is so, then it is so.

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God says that by this method He passed over all the sin of the world. Transcending time and space, He passed all the sins of the world to Jesus once and for all. This is the gospel. God's making us clean of all our sins by the secret of the baptism—this is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And Jesus, carrying the sin of the world He had thus taken over, was nailed to the Cross, judged with the shedding of His blood, and rose from the dead, and became our Savior. As the lamb of the Old Testament took over sin by the laying on of hands and shed its blood and died in the sinner's place, so Jesus, the Lamb of God, received our sins passed on to Him by the baptism He received from John and was judged in our place on the Cross. Now we must learn this word of truth and live believing that word. It has come to pass exactly as the word says: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. We must not go back again to the old town. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The compassion of the Lord, who does not send them away hungry

< Mark 8:1-10 >

"In those days, the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and said to them, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar.' Then His disciples answered Him, 'How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?' He asked them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven.' So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them. So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments. Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha."

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The Lord spoke first of the multitude's hunger

A great multitude was gathered in the wilderness. They had been with Jesus three days already and had nothing to eat. Some had come from afar. They were now in such a state that if they were sent back, their strength might fail and they might collapse on the road. In this scene, the first to put the multitude's distress into words was Jesus. There is no record that the multitude loudly demanded food, and no record that the disciples first drew up a plan. Jesus called His disciples and said, *"I have compassion on the multitude" (Mark 8:2)*.

The Lord's compassion is not vague pity. The Lord knew how long they had been with Him, what they now lacked, what could happen on the road home, and even the fact that some among them had come from afar. A person may look at outward appearances and think they can still hold out. If the crowd is quiet, one may suppose there is no problem. But the Lord sees even the needs not spoken and the danger soon to come. In His compassion, exact knowledge and practical care are together.

Hunger is no light word to the person who has been through it. Like the memory of being so hungry as a child that one picked up discarded strands of noodles, glancing around lest others see, hunger shakes even one's dignity and thinking. To the person waiting for a single meal, food is not a small favor but the strength to walk the road right now. Jesus came to this earth in the flesh and knew what weariness and thirst and hunger are. Therefore His gaze toward the multitude was not the gaze of one pitying from afar, but the gaze of God who came near, into the weak circumstances of man.

We sometimes speak only of spiritual needs and treat the distress of the body as trivial, or, on the contrary, see only the needs of the body and forget the starvation of the soul. But Jesus

did not turn away from the multitude's bodies, nor did He see them merely as people seeking bread. They had stayed three days with the Lord listening to the word, and now their food had run out. The Lord did not send away hungry those who had come to hear the word. The Lord who made both body and soul cares for the whole person.

So it is with our own circumstances. There are needs we have told no one, lacks we ourselves do not know how to solve, times when we have come this far but have no strength left to go back. At such times we must not conclude that the Lord does not know. The Lord's care moves ahead of our explanation. Even when we cannot properly form the words to ask for help, the Lord knows all—the three days, the long road, and the possibility of fainting. Faith is not insisting that we have no difficulties; it is relying on the compassion of the Lord, who knows our circumstances exactly.

The disciples saw the impossibility of the wilderness

Hearing Jesus' words, the disciples asked a realistic question: *"How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?" (Mark 8:4)*. The disciples' words were not a wrong reading of the situation. The place was a wilderness, the people were many, and nowhere nearby was there a place to buy enough bread. By their calculation it was impossible. The problem was not the calculation itself, but that within the calculation there was no room for what the Lord would do.

We cannot easily blame the disciples' question. We, too, when people are many and what we have is little, first count the lack. We compare the size of the work to be done with the

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resources in our hands, and if the gap is too great, we draw back before even starting. Before the work of preaching the gospel to one soul, of caring for an exhausted person, of serving the church, the knowledge and time and means we have look too small. And so the question rises in our hearts: where could we get enough to feed them?

But the Lord did not tell the disciples to go find a storehouse outside the wilderness. He asked, *"How many loaves do you have?" (Mark 8:5)*. This question was not a word testing the disciples' ability so as to make them produce a miracle. It was a word making them bring out before the Lord what they had. What the disciples had was seven loaves and a few small fish. It was little enough to be embarrassing before four thousand people, but it was the actual thing that would be entrusted to the Lord's hands.

The Lord does not tell us to pretend to have what we do not have. Nor does He tell us to exaggerate abilities we lack. He only asks what has now been entrusted to us, what has already been given, what we can bring out in obedience. I may have nothing but the time to listen to one person. I may have nothing but one short passage of the word with which to explain the gospel. I may have no ample means and yet can share a small meal; no talent to stand in front and yet can serve where no one sees. We do not offer it because it is enough to feed four thousand. We offer it because we believe the Lord will receive it and use it.

In the disciples' answer there was at least the honesty of not hiding what they had. They did not say, we have nothing, because there were only seven; nor did they bluster that this would be sufficient. Before the Lord we need the attitude that acknowledges lack exactly. For the church to acknowledge the limits of its people and means and experience is not unbelief. Faith is knowing the limits and yet not making those limits the

final conclusion, entrusting what one actually has to the Lord. Plan responsibly, but do not lock the sovereignty of supply inside the planning sheet.

Here we must make one more thing clear. It was not the devotion of those who offered the little that caused the miracle. Nor did the disciples' sacrifice multiply the bread. The One who had compassion on the multitude, received the bread, gave thanks, and distributed it is Jesus. We must not trade places between the fact that what man offered was small and the fact that the Lord's power is great. If we make the small devotion the hero, the Lord's compassion and power get pushed behind. The center of this event is not a formula that if we offer something small we obtain great success, but the gospel that before the impossible the Lord supplied, and had His disciples take part in that work.

The Lord broke and gave, and the disciples set it before the multitude

Jesus had the multitude sit down on the ground. And He took the loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to His disciples. The disciples set them before the multitude. He blessed the small fish also and had them set before them. In this short chain of motions there is an order that shows who the Owner of the supply is and where the servant's place is. The Lord receives, the Lord blesses, the Lord breaks and gives. The disciples set before the people what they received from the Lord.

The disciples were not the source of the bread. Nor were they people who stepped up to meet the multitude's need by their own ability. Yet neither were they bystanders who did nothing. When Jesus put the bread in their hands, they went about among the

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multitude and shared it. Setting bread before four thousand people makes us think of a serving that could not end with one fine gesture. It must have gone on: returning to the Lord to receive, going to the people to set it down, and coming back again to the Lord. The Lord accomplished together with His disciples what He could have done alone.

This is the place the church and the saints must remember today. The church is not a factory that produces the Bread of life. The saint is not a person who feeds his own thoughts and wisdom to people's souls. We are people who honestly set before people the word and the gospel received from the Lord. The deliverer has no reason to make himself look great. For the one who received the bread ought to thank the Lord who gave it, not praise the disciple's dexterity. At the same time, the deliverer cannot withdraw on the excuse of his smallness. For the work of setting down what the Lord has put in his hands has been entrusted to the disciple.

To share the word is to respect a person's hunger. Before a starving person, we do not first demand to know why he failed to prepare, but set out the food received from the Lord. To dilute the truth and merely suit his taste is not love, and to throw correct content coldly and wound him is not compassion either. As Jesus knew people's circumstances and fed them, we too must be patient and explain so that the hearer can understand. We must look one step further, so that the one who came from afar does not faint on the road.

It is the same in the family. Parents cannot make their child's soul their own possession, but they can steadily set the word received from the Lord on the table. In the church, the one who believed first cannot make faith for the newcomer in his stead, but he can make a place for him to hear the gospel and receive his questions. Books and writing and translation and evangelism

and relief and serving meals are each different hands, but they are joined in setting before the multitude what has been received from the Lord. It is not that the conspicuous person did all the work. Before the bread is set in front of a person, many hands can obey.

Yet we must not make the amount of our serving the standard of salvation. One does not obtain the remission of sins for having shared much; service and offerings and toil cannot pay the price of salvation. The sinner is not made righteous before God by the bread in his own hands. He must first receive from the Lord of life. Salvation is a gift received by believing what the Lord accomplished, and sharing is the fruit borne by the person who has received that gift. If this order is reversed, serving becomes not thanksgiving for grace but labor that piles up self-righteousness.

The Lord who gave the bread of the body also solves the starvation of the soul

The bread the multitude ate in the wilderness was actual bread. Therefore we must not turn this event into arbitrary symbolism of numbers and objects and blur the facts of the text. Jesus really fed hungry people until they were full. But the Lord's compassion revealed through this work does not stop at one meal for the body. The body that has eaten one meal grows hungry again, but the soul under sin and death cannot live by any food man makes. We need the gospel of life, which ends the problem of sin and lets us live with God.

A person can pile up much worldly knowledge, religious zeal, and moral resolve and still be starving spiritually. He keeps striving to wash away his sin, yet thinks sin still remains in his

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heart, and tries to repay today's wrong with tomorrow's good deed. But one's own efforts cannot receive the judgment of sin in one's place. The food of the soul is not a merit I make and eat, but the salvation the Lord has completed and gives.

Jesus took on the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John. All our sins—past, present, and future—were included in that sin of the world. Jesus, who took on the sins, received the judgment of those sins in our place on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead. This salvation is not something man completes by adding little by little; it is what Jesus accomplished once and for all. The person who believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of sins by which all sins are removed once and for all, becomes a righteous person without sin, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift and is born again and becomes God's child.

Even the person who has received the remission of sins can do wrong, since the flesh is weak. That does not mean he may take the wrong lightly or need not turn from it. But our lack cannot turn the salvation Jesus accomplished once and for all back into something unfinished. Instead of paying the price again with our own deeds, we return to the gospel the Lord accomplished, admit the wrong, and walk in the light. Whenever we hunger, we do not chew our own righteousness but eat by faith the food of life already given.

This gospel is not food that a few eat and then it is gone. One soul's believing does not diminish another soul's portion. A person of any nation, any circumstance, any generation can come to the Lord and hear. Nor does the power of the gospel wear out while we preach it. Therefore the church has no reason to tell the spiritually starving that the food is insufficient. Neither do we need to invent a new gospel. We need only hear the exact gospel fully, believe it, and preach it again.

To share the gospel is not to repeat slogans. We must unfold step by step, according to the Scriptures, why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, whose sins and what sins He took on by that baptism, why He had to die on the Cross, and what the resurrection confirms. We must not presume the hearer already knows because he has long led a religious life. As the Lord looked after the hunger of the multitude that had been with Him three days, we must also look after the soul that has long been in church and yet is worn out without the assurance of the remission of sins.

Hearing the same gospel many times is not vain repetition either. As the body does not refuse today's food because it ate yesterday, the soul keeps hearing the completed gospel and comes to know its meaning more clearly. Only, we must not stay at mechanically repeating familiar phrases, but hold our present fears and guilt and self-righteousness up to the word. The gospel does not send us hunting for ever new ways of salvation; it makes us believe more deeply what Jesus has already completed. Only the saint who has first eaten his fill does not try to hide his empty bowl, and can urge the food of life on others as well.

They ate and were filled, and there was some left over

The text does not say that everyone had a small taste. It testifies, *"So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of leftover fragments" (Mark 8:8)*. The Lord's supply did not end short of the multitude's need. The people ate their fill, and the leftover fragments were gathered as well. What the disciples saw at first was the wilderness and the lack, but what they saw at the last was a filled multitude and baskets left over.

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That the leftover fragments were gathered is not a permission to waste the Lord's grace carelessly. Rather, it makes us treasure what we have received and care for it well for the next serving. If we have received the word abundantly, we must remember it, meditate on it, and keep it so that we can pass it on to others. Preparing writings and books that explain the gospel, arranging them so the next generation can read them, and translating them so that those who speak other languages can hear—this too can be a serving that gathers the leftover food well and shares it.

But we can lose heart when the fruit is not visible at once. It can seem that no one listens to what I have said, and the labor I have offered can look too small. At such times we must not try to manipulate the outcome, but remember that the Owner of the supply is the Lord. The disciples' work was not to multiply the bread but to receive it from the Lord and set it before the multitude. Do not exalt or condemn yourself by the size of the fruit; share faithfully the word that has been entrusted.

We must also look after the bodily needs of those who serve the gospel. To keep sending an exhausted person away hungry in the name of doing spiritual work does not accord with the Lord of this passage. The Lord did not look only at the purpose of the ministry; He saw the person who would faint on the road. The community must not ask only about the results of the work, but care for the one who has labored, so that he rests and eats and recovers. Before condemning one person's weakness, we need the compassion that considers how far he has come.

Let us go forward to the place of sharing the life we have received

Dear friends, where are we today? Perhaps, like the

multitude, you are exhausted, without even the strength to return. Then sit honestly before the compassion of the Lord. The Lord knows your three days and your long road. Do not walk on pretending to be fine in your own strength until you collapse; receive the grace He supplies within the word and the church. Above all, believe with your heart the gospel of the remission of sins, which Jesus completed by taking on sin with the baptism He received from John, being judged and dying on the Cross, and rising again.

Perhaps, like the disciples, you stand before a need too great. What I have is little and the wilderness looks vast. Then do not stay at the words, where could we feed so many? When the Lord asks what you have, bring out honestly the word and time and means and talents you have received. Do not offer them as the price of salvation; offer them as the fruit of faith, thankful for the salvation already received.

It is not we who save people. Jesus alone is the Savior. Nor do we know all the needs of a soul. The Lord alone knows a person's deep circumstances. But the Lord today also puts bread into the disciples' hands. He has us explain the gospel to one person, hand over one book of the word, seat the weary at the table, teach the truth to a young soul, and pray for those far away.

Let us believe in the Lord, who did not send the multitude away hungry. We must not boast greatly of what we have, nor hide it because it is too small. Let us receive it from the Lord and set it before people. The food of life comes from the Lord, and the joy of serving lies in sharing that food together. That the person who has eaten his fill within the Lord's compassion now looks around at other starving souls—this is not a condition for obtaining salvation but a beautiful fruit of faith borne in the person who has been saved. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The way of the Cross, learned after confessing Christ

< Mark 8:27-38 >

"Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, 'Who do men say that I am?' So they answered, 'John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said to Him, 'You are the Christ.' Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him. And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.' When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, 'Whoever 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 and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit 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 whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also

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will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.'"

Beyond other people's answers to my own confession

On the way to the towns of Caesarea Philippi with His disciples, Jesus asked. First He asked, *"Who do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27)*. The disciples passed on the various answers: John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets. People did not regard Jesus as an ordinary figure. They valued Him highly, naming great religious leaders and prophets. But a respectful appraisal is not yet right faith.

If we say only that Jesus was an excellent teacher, one who taught love, a prophet who worked amazing miracles, we have not confessed sufficiently who He is. John the Baptist was also a servant of God, and Elijah was a servant of God. The prophets, too, were people sent by God. But Jesus is not one among many servants; He is God who sent the servants, and the Christ who came to save sinners. People's high appraisals can veil that difference.

The Lord soon turned the question to His disciples. *"But who do you say that I am?"* Before this question it is not enough to summarize the world's opinions. It cannot be answered by saying what one's parents believe, what the church confesses, or how famous people evaluate Jesus. The word *"you"* reaches each person's heart. It is the question: who do I know and believe Jesus to be?

Peter answered, *"You are the Christ."* It is one short sentence, but a confession holding Jesus' identity and ministry. Christ means the Anointed One. In the Old Testament, kings and priests

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and prophets were anointed. Jesus is the true Prophet, who makes plain to us the will of God; the High Priest of heaven, who takes on sin with His own body and accomplishes salvation; and the King, who rules those who believe and leads them into the everlasting kingdom.

To confess Jesus as the Christ is not to memorize one religious title. It is to believe that His word is truer than my thinking, that not my merit but His ministry saves me, and that the final Master of my life is not I but Jesus. This confession calls for knowledge and trust and obedience together. If with the lips one says Christ and yet refuses His way of salvation or does not want His rule, one has not yet sufficiently accepted the meaning of the confession.

Neither are the offices of King and High Priest and Prophet ornaments separate from one another. Jesus the true Prophet tells the reality of sin and salvation; Jesus the High Priest solves the problem of sin with His own body, according to that word; and Jesus the King rules and keeps the saved people. We cannot take only the help of His salvation and refuse His rule. Nor can we speak only of the King's authority while leaving out the High Priest's ministry of taking on sin, or take only the good teaching while refusing His atonement. The confession *"You are the Christ"* is a confession that receives the whole ministry of Jesus.

The way the Christ had to go

After Peter's confession, Jesus began to teach His own death and resurrection. He spoke openly *"that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31)*. The disciples who had confessed who the Christ is

now had to learn how the Christ accomplishes salvation.

Jesus' death was neither an unexpected accident nor the result of a failed mission. The text says that He must suffer, be rejected, be killed, and rise again after three days. In the expression "must" lies the necessity of God's plan of salvation. The way to bring sinners to life was not the way of taking the world's power amid people's cheers, but the way of the Christ who took on sin being judged and dying and then rising again.

Before He was nailed to the Cross, Jesus received baptism from John. With that baptism He took on His own body the sins of every person in the world. Since the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had taken on sin, received in our place God's judgment on that sin and died on the Cross shedding His blood. And after three days He actually rose from the dead. The baptism and the Cross and the resurrection are not events separate from one another but one saving work that delivers us from sin and death.

If we speak of the Cross only as a moving example of sacrifice, we miss why the Christ had to die. If we leave out the baptism and speak only of the Cross, it becomes unclear for what sins Jesus was judged. If we leave out the resurrection and speak only of the death, we cannot convey in full the completion of salvation and the confirmation of new life. Jesus took on sin with His baptism, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again, overcoming sin and death.

The person who believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of sins by which all sins are removed once and for all. Salvation is not a reward earned for carrying one's own cross well. It is a gift received by believing the ministry Jesus first completed with His own body. The believer obtains the new standing of a righteous person before God, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, is born again, and becomes God's child.

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Therefore, before we speak of the disciple's cross, we must know clearly what the Christ's Cross accomplished.

Even after a right confession, man's thinking can come first

When Jesus spoke of His death and resurrection, Peter took hold of Him and remonstrated. A moment before, he had rightly confessed, You are the Christ; now he could not accept the way the Christ would go. To Peter's eyes, the Christ and suffering must not have seemed to fit together. It looked like a heart that cared for the Lord, but his words became words that blocked the way by which Jesus would accomplish salvation.

Jesus looked at His disciples and rebuked Peter sternly: *"For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."* Peter did not say this out of hatred for Jesus. On the contrary, he did not want Jesus to be rejected and killed. But even a thought that looks well-intentioned can become the things of men if it goes against God's plan of salvation.

We too, after believing and confessing the right gospel, can put our own thinking first. We call Jesus Lord, and yet when the way He has spoken is uncomfortable, we look for another way. We think the things of God must always lead to visible success and recognition and comfort. When loss comes, we conclude it cannot be the Lord's will, and when we win no applause, we suppose we have taken a wrong turn on the way of the gospel. In this way, even while confessing the Christ, we can want a Christ without the Cross.

The things of men do not always come in an evil shape. They can slip in even within words of protecting the Lord, within the cause of caring for the community, within the judgment of taking

reality into account. The standard of judgment is not only how earnest my intention is, but whether it accords with the word of God and the direction of the gospel. Peter took hold of Jesus and tried to turn Him in the direction of his own thinking, but a disciple is not one who stands in front of the Lord and sets the course; he is one who follows behind the Lord.

That does not mean we may brand every judgment that surveys reality as the things of men. The reason Jesus rebuked Peter was not that he calculated the situation, but that he stood in the way of the death and resurrection that would accomplish salvation. In the name of minding the things of God, we must not be irresponsible or make light of others' suffering. Rather, holding fast the purpose of the word, we must look carefully at people's circumstances and bear our charge by honest means. Keeping the center of the gospel and serving wisely do not oppose each other.

The words of Jesus, *"Get behind Me,"* are also words that restore the disciple's place. Do not try to direct the Lord from in front; go behind, listen to the Lord's word, and follow. The most dangerous moment in the life of faith is not when I have no thoughts of my own, but when I identify my own thinking with the will of God. We must continually ask and discern before the word. Is what I am now defending the gospel, or my own face? Am I minding the things of God, or looking only for the way that seems safe in men's eyes?

What it is to deny oneself

Jesus called the multitude together with His disciples and said, *"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34)*. To deny

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oneself is not to hate oneself or to remove one's personality. Nor is it to count the life God has made as worthless. It is to come down from the seat where my thoughts and desires and judgments were the final authority, and to acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

The scene with Peter shows concretely what that means. He tried to block Jesus' way with his own thinking. To deny oneself, one must not insist, I said it for the Lord, so it must be right, but acknowledge before the Lord's rebuke that my thinking can be wrong. Even for the person who has received the remission of sins, every judgment does not automatically become perfect. Because the weakness of the flesh and old habits and fears remain, we must lay down our own thinking again and again before the word.

This denial does not end with one resolution. As a dog that has strayed off the road, drawn by the scents of a side path, realizes it has drifted far from its master and comes running back, so we too, while following the Lord, at times fall into side paths through our own gain and stubbornness. At such times we do not doubt the fact of the remission of sins and become sinners again; we hear the reproof of the Holy Spirit who is in our hearts, acknowledge that our thinking was wrong, and return behind the Lord. The Holy Spirit is not One who condemns and casts us away, but One who makes us perceive the word and leads us into the way of truth.

Neither does taking up one's own cross mean supplementing Jesus' atonement. The sufferings we undergo are not the same as the Cross of the Christ, who received in our place the punishment of the sin of the world. Only Jesus' Cross saves the sinner. The disciple's cross refers to the obedience and loss and responsibility that are his own portion, borne as one who has been saved follows the Lord. Because of the gospel one may be

misunderstood, one may have to lay down one's own comfort, and one may have to serve for a long time someone hard to love.

Therefore self-denial must not be taught as a condition of salvation. It is not that the person who has sacrificed more obtains a more complete remission of sins. The remission of sins is received only by believing that Jesus took on sin with the baptism He received from John, passed through the judgment and death of the Cross, and rose again. Self-denial and obedience are the fruits of faith borne after receiving that grace. Conversely, we must not say that since salvation is grace, the life of following the Lord does not matter. In the person who has believed the true gospel the Holy Spirit dwells, and the Holy Spirit does not leave that person lying as he is on the road of self-centeredness, but leads him into the Lord's way.

The life that cannot be exchanged even for the whole world

After speaking the paradox of saving and losing one's life, Jesus asked, *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Mark 8:36)*. The world calls gaining success. It promises that if you gain more possessions, a higher place, wider influence, life will become secure. But even the greatest success of gaining the whole world cannot compensate for the failure of losing one's life.

A man cannot buy back his own life, whatever he gives. He cannot cancel death by giving his property, nor escape the judgment of sin by giving his honor. That is why salvation cannot be a transaction. We cannot gather our good deeds and sacrifices and religious attainments and exchange them for everlasting life. For the sinner who could not pay the price, the

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Christ Himself bore the price. The saved person is a person who has received as a gift the life more precious than the whole world.

Then what does it mean to lose one's life? It must not be narrowed to mean that everyone must meet the same form of death for the gospel. The person who follows the Lord lays down the attitude of clutching his life as his own possession and living only for himself. He entrusts his time and plans and talents and means to the Lord's will, and bears the losses needed for the gospel. At times, even before actual persecution and threats to life, he does not deny Christ.

This way is not a way of recklessly harming oneself or hunting for suffering. It is the way of treasuring the life the Lord has entrusted while acknowledging that the Owner of that life is the Lord. It does not boast of its faith by the measure of what it has given up of the world, and it does not judge other saints by the results gained in serving the gospel. Each person's cross and circumstances differ, but the common center is putting the Lord and the gospel before my own gain.

At the moment of choice we must weigh the whole world against life. When abandoning honesty would bring profit, when hiding the gospel would make relations comfortable, when following men's approval rather than the Lord's word would keep one's position—what will you choose? Looking only at the immediate loss, saving one's own life looks wise. But seen from the standpoint of eternity, keeping the life received in Christ and walking with the gospel is the true profit.

The confession that is not ashamed of the gospel

Jesus warned against being ashamed of Him and of His words in a sinful generation. Shame closes the lips. For fear of

people's mockery one can hide the fact that one believes in Jesus, and, fearing that the gospel He accomplished by the baptism He received from John, the death of the Cross, and the resurrection may sound strange, one can blur its core. One can speak of Jesus only as a good teacher, to suit the world's standards, and tuck the confession of the Christ away behind.

Not being ashamed of the gospel does not mean speaking roughly and rudely. An attitude that does not respect the other person must not be dressed up as boldness. True boldness is explaining with love and long patience while not changing the content of the gospel. It is telling plainly who Jesus is, why He received baptism from John, and why He died on the Cross and rose again. It neither manipulates people's response nor hides the truth for fear of their response.

Peter's first confession and his later remonstrance give us an important warning. Saying with the lips, *"You are the Christ,"* and actually receiving the words of the Christ must go together. We can make the right confession in worship and put the things of men first in daily life. The confession, therefore, is confirmed in daily choices. It leads on to a life that is not ashamed of the gospel even at a loss, that denies my thinking when it differs from the word, and that serves with love the people entrusted to me.

When that fruit appears slowly, we must not at once deny salvation itself. A believer, too, can fear and can fall. Peter also heard a severe rebuke right after his right confession. What matters is not justifying one's wrong and leaving the Lord, but hearing the rebuke and going again behind the Lord. When the Holy Spirit exposes our weakness, we return to the gospel, give thanks for the remission of sins received, and follow again.

The church must help one another walk this way. To the saint who has fallen into difficulty, rather than condemning him for

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insufficient sacrifice, we must tell again the gospel the Christ accomplished. Rather than driving the one worn out from preaching the gospel to work more without condition, we must bear the burden together and let him rest. At the same time, when someone keeps putting off the gospel for the comfort of the world, we must wake him with love. When we clearly distinguish the condition of salvation from the fruits of faith, we can keep both grace and the seriousness of discipleship.

Let us walk behind the Lord in hope

Dear friends, let us hear Jesus' question again. People speak of Jesus in many ways. But who do you confess Jesus to be? He is not one of the prophets but our Creator and Savior, the Christ who fulfilled in full the work of King and High Priest and Prophet. Do you believe with your heart the fact that He took on all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead?

This faith delivers us from sin and death and gives new life. Christ's resurrection is not merely a symbol that hope comes after sorrow. It is the event of salvation in which Jesus, who really died, really rose, and it is the confirmation that gives the believer new life and the hope of the coming resurrection of the body. Therefore we know that present loss and suffering are not the last word. The risen King is coming again, and we have the hope of living forever in His kingdom.

The person who holds that hope does not stand in the way of the Christ, caught by the things of men. Even when my plans collapse, I trust the Lord's word the more; when my thinking is wrong, I acknowledge it; and I do not avoid the portion I must bear because of the gospel. It is not that we follow because we

are perfect. We are often shaken and sometimes go down side paths, but led by the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we deny ourselves again and return behind the Lord.

The life of knowing Christ is more precious than gaining the whole world. The way the Lord approves is more precious than the world's praise. Our own cross is not a merit that saves us, but it is the fruit of faith that reveals whom the saved person serves as Master. Let us confess today with our lips and hearts and lives: You are the Christ. And following that confession, let us not be ashamed of the gospel, but walk behind the Lord in the hope of the resurrection. ✉

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◇ About the Next Series

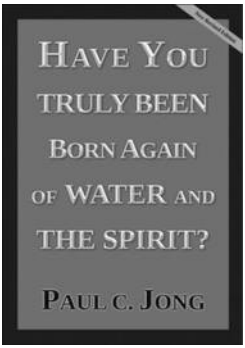
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

We sincerely hope that the books by Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will serve as spiritual nourishment to strengthen your faith.

News about newly released books, as well as various ways to access them—including eBooks (PDF, EPUB), audiobooks (M4A, MP3), and online reading—can be found at **www.bjnewlife.org.**

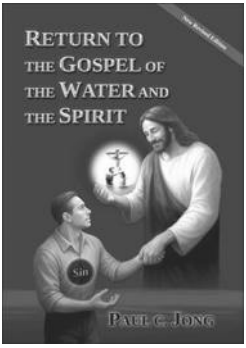
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

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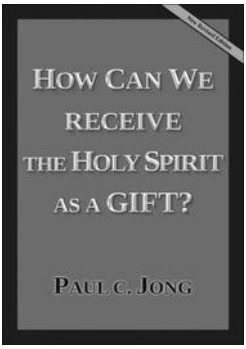
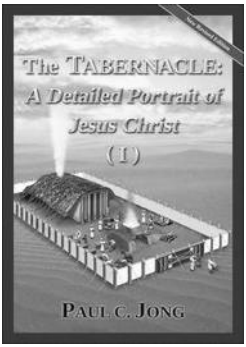
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

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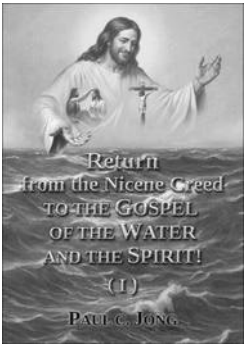
Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

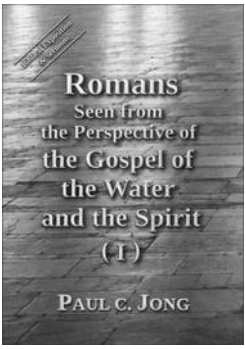
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

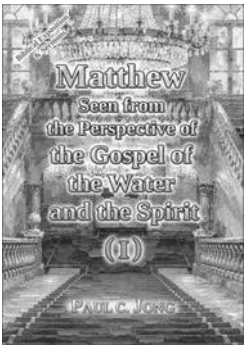
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

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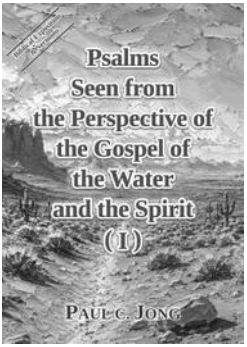
Psalm seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)

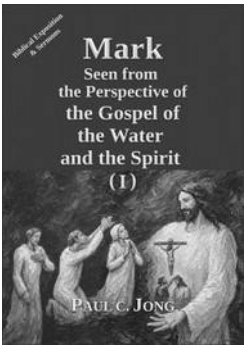


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who is to come.

This book is a biblical exposition that unfolds the Psalms from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. David's songs are not an outpouring of emotion but the confession of a righteous man who has received the remission of sins, a prophetic praise that looked up to the Christ who is to come. The blessing, righteousness, and peace of the Psalms do not come from human goodness but from the salvation God accomplished in Christ.

Beneath it all flows a single gospel. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus took our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the cross, and rose from the dead to make us righteous. When you open the Psalms with this gospel, the old songs come alive as your own confession, and this book leads you to the blessed place of those clothed in the righteousness of God.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

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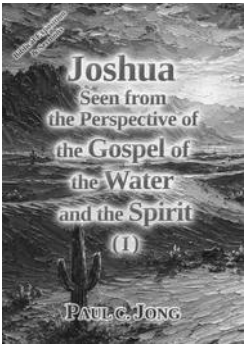
Joshua Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)

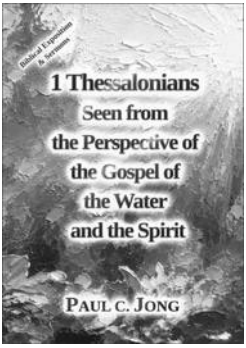


The Book of Joshua is often read as the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan and its victories in war. But the heart of Joshua chapters 1 through 12 is not human courage or strength; it is God's salvation. It shows how God leads sinners across the Jordan into the land of promise and makes them enjoy the remission of sins and true rest.

This book explains Joshua chapters 1 through 12 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. From the death of Moses and the crossing of the Jordan to the fall of Jericho and the defeat of the kings of Canaan, Joshua points to Jesus Christ the Savior. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from death to complete salvation.

Discover the true victory that is obtained not by human strength but by believing the Word of God. Lay down your own righteousness, rise again from failure, be united with the Church of God, and walk boldly in the rest and the spiritual inheritance God has already given.

1 Thessalonians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit



The young church in Thessalonica, established not long before, might well have collapsed under the persecution that pressed in from every side; yet with firm faith, love, and hope it carried the gospel throughout the whole region. What kept these weak people from falling? It was not a religion delivered in word only, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which came in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.

This book opens the five chapters of First Thessalonians anew with that very gospel. It is the gospel by which Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sin of the world, was judged in our place for that sin on the cross, and rose again from death, delivering us from sin and death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the power of God that turns a sinner into a righteous one, and turns the fear of death into living hope.

If you desire a faith unshaken in the last days, open this book. Here is the sure word by which you receive the remission of sins—life and true comfort for you.

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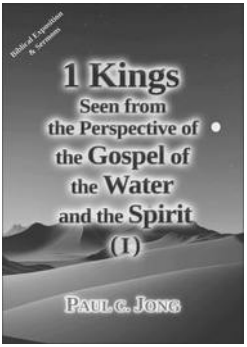
1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

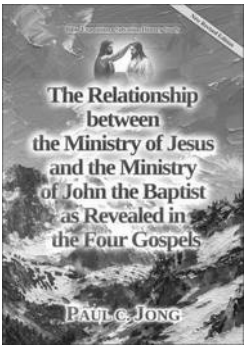


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures forever.

This book reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the Temple and its furnishings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Do not rely on your own wisdom and your own kingdom. Use the wisdom, wealth, and time you have received for the gospel and for souls, and serve Jesus Christ as the King of your heart, building the house of God.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

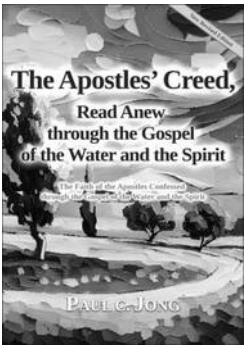
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

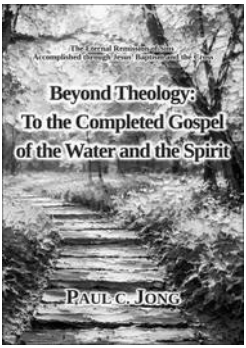


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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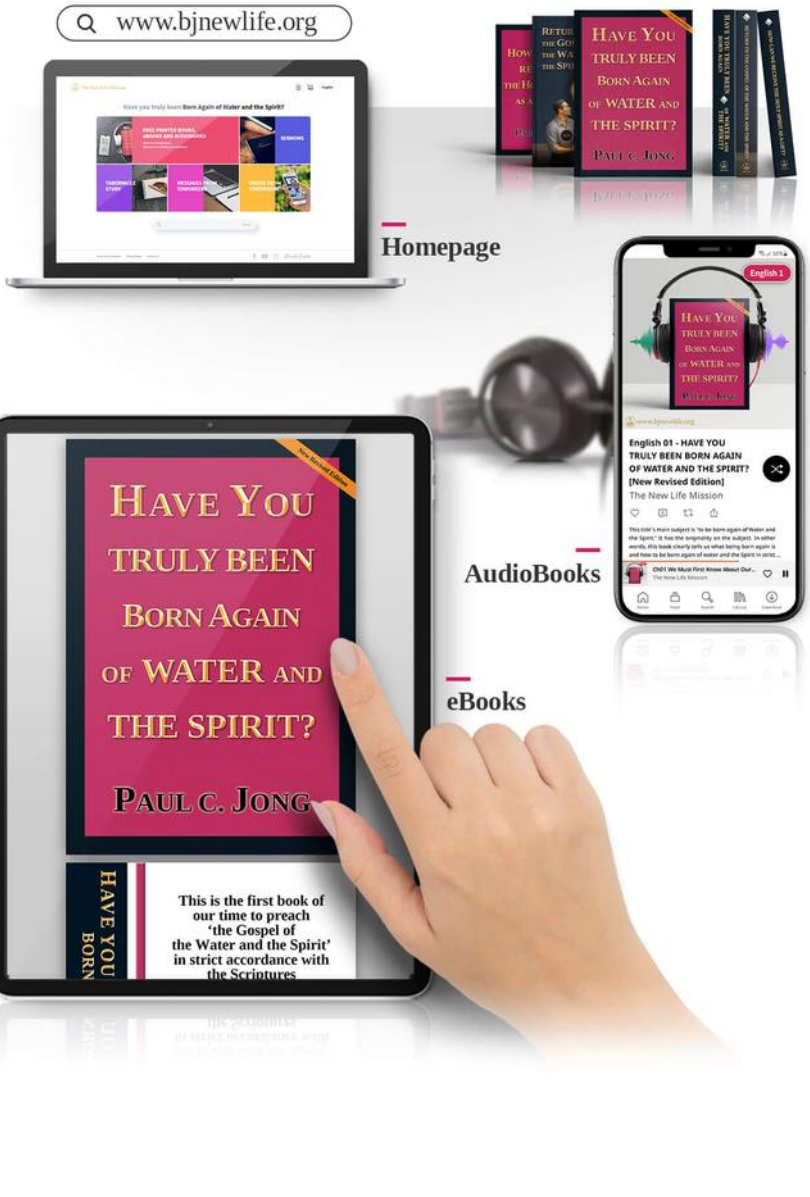

Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

If you wish to possess printed books to build up spiritual nourishment, or if you sincerely wish to participate in our gospel spreading ministry, please apply by writing your reason, name, contact information, and address to the email address below.

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Please help us spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ through our books so that more people can be born again of the water and the Spirit. We would also be grateful if you could introduce our website and books to many people and invite them to visit.

THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Contact: John Shin, General Secretary
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Recommendation for E-book and Audiobook Storage and Downloads

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Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 90-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

The Gospel of Mark, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Why did people fail to realize who Jesus was, even after seeing His words and His miracles?

A demon-possessed man was made whole, a sick woman was healed, the dead were raised, and when He walked on the sea the wind also ceased. Yet the people of His hometown regarded Jesus as nothing more than a carpenter and did not believe that He was the Son of God. Even His disciples, though they had seen Him feed the five thousand and the four thousand, worried about food when they had only one loaf in the boat. They saw the miracles that took place before their eyes, but they did not realize that the Jesus who worked them was the Son of God and the Savior.

These miracles are not a promise that worldly wishes will be fulfilled; they show that Jesus is the Son of God who rules over sin, Satan, and death. For man, a more fundamental problem than sickness and hunger is the sin that comes out of the heart. That sin is not removed by washing one's hands or by keeping religious doctrines.

Jesus asks, "But who do you say that I am?" He is the Christ who bore all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged on the Cross, and then rose again to complete our salvation. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all his sins at once, receives the Holy Spirit, and lives according to the Word.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II), written by pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission, will lead you to know Jesus Christ rightly and bring you to Him.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.