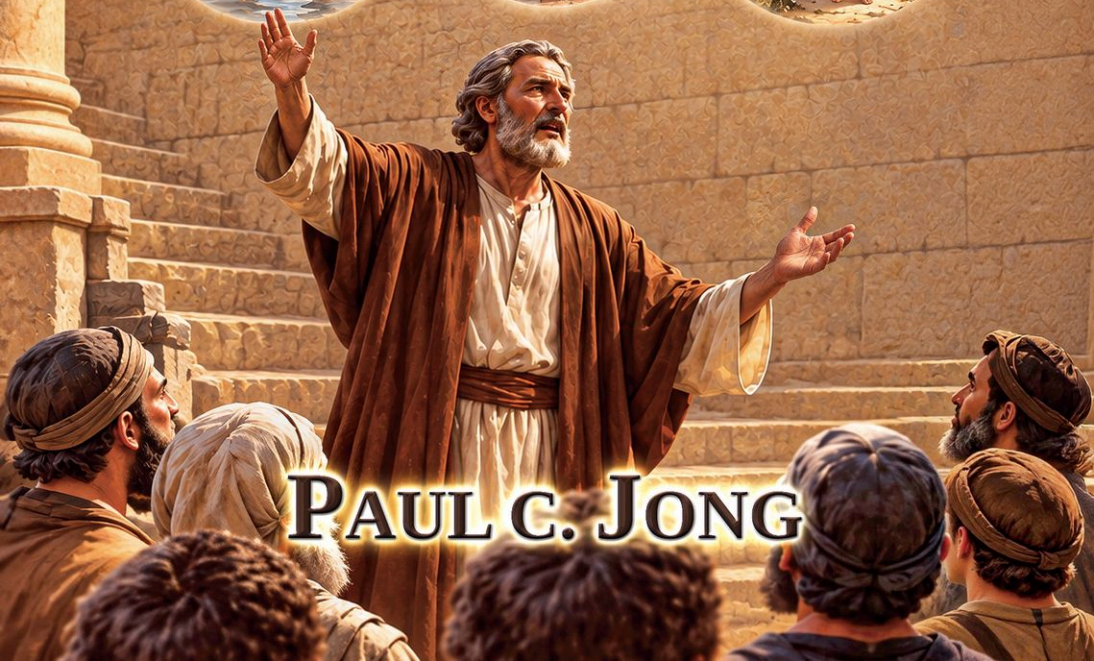
Sermons by Paul C. Jong

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Epistle to the Romans
Volume 1

Chapters 1–6





PAUL C. JONG



"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)

The free righteousness that the gospel of the water and the Spirit conveys has a price that Jesus paid by laying down His life. Jesus, who had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins in our place through the blood He shed on the Cross, and by rising again from death He became the Savior who has remitted even our lifelong sins.

The redemption that Romans speaks of is His work of buying and rescuing us, who were slaves of sin, with this price; so the person who receives into his heart the redemption for which the Lord paid in full is justified freely, without any merit of his own.

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and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

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Sermons by Paul C. Jong

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Epistle to the Romans

Volume 1

Chapters 1–6

PAUL C. JONG

Hephzibah Publishing House
A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
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The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Epistle to the Romans Volume 1

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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.

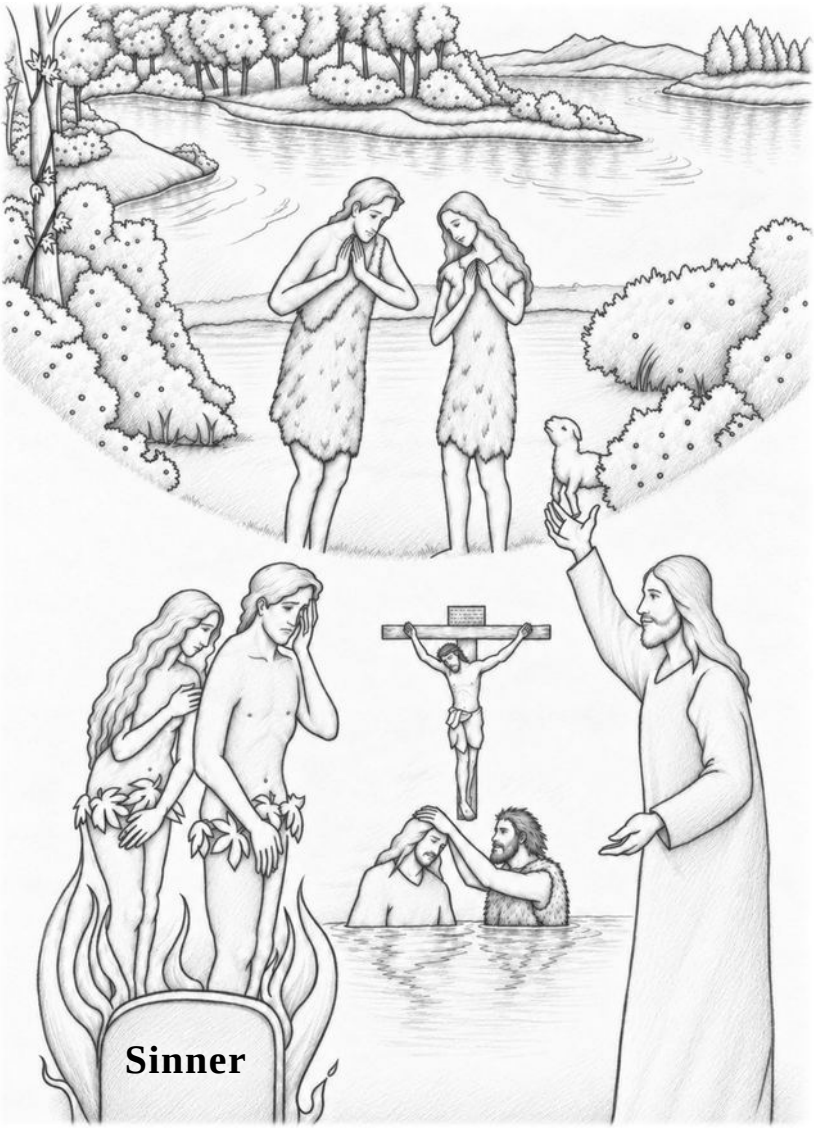
I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

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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Preface

The righteousness of God revealed to us who were under sin

Paul calls himself a servant of Christ and writes this epistle as one who owes the gospel to all people. The gospel of which he says he is not ashamed is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the blessed news that Jesus received baptism from John and thereby had the sin of the world, including my sins and yours, transferred to Him once and for all, that He shed His blood and died on the Cross to receive the judgment for that sin, and that He remitted our sins by rising again from death. The reason Paul was not ashamed of this gospel of the water and the Spirit is that the righteousness of God is revealed in it.

"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).

In the righteousness of God there is not the slightest bit of human merit mixed in; there is only what God Himself accomplished to save sinners. That is why Paul does not present a way for people to be approved by God by piling up better works, but first makes clear the fact that all people are under sin. The wrath of God is revealed against those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, that is, those who know the Creator, whom He made known through all things, yet are not thankful and serve the creature more than the Creator. Neither the one who judges others nor the one who knows and teaches the law can escape his own sin before the word, because God looks not at outward appearance or position but at the center of the heart.

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The law exposes even the sin within the works we had considered right, but it cannot wash away the sin it has exposed; so, as the word says, *"For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20),* knowing sin and being saved from sin are different things.

If a person who has come to know his sin tries to make himself righteous through more religious effort, he is still placing the basis of his salvation in himself. But the faithfulness of God is not made without effect because people do not believe, and even if every man is a liar, God is true. Paul does not stop at the word of the law that stops our mouths, but leads us to the righteousness of God witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, because the God who pointed out our sin has also prepared, just as He promised, the way to save sinners. Therefore, the One we must look to as we read this word is Jesus Christ, who solved the problem of sin on our behalf.

The righteousness received freely has a price that was paid

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

Redemption is the work of paying the price to buy and rescue a slave of sin. Within the word that we have been justified freely lies the fact that Jesus paid that price in full. In the sin offering of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the offering and passed his sins on to it, and the offering that had received those sins shed its blood and died, paying the price of those sins. When we examine the redemption Paul spoke of in terms of this relationship between the passing on of sins and the

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sacrifice, we come to understand why the baptism Jesus received and His death on the Cross must go together.

If we explain the gospel mentioned at the beginning in terms of redemption, we see that when Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, my sins and yours were also included in that sin of the world, and because of that sin passed on to Him, the Lord received on the Cross in our place the judgment we were to receive. Because our sins had passed on to Jesus, the judgment the Lord received was none other than the judgment for our sins, and so, when we believe in the blood of the Cross, we can also believe the fact that the price of our sins has already been paid. If one believes only in the blood of the Cross while leaving out the baptism, there is no place where sin was passed on; that is why, in the redemption Paul preached, the baptism always comes first.

This is also why Paul preaches Jesus as the propitiation whom God set forth by His blood. God did not receive us while leaving the judgment for sin in place; rather, because He brought all that judgment down upon Jesus, who had received our sins passed on to Him, He has reconciled to Himself those who believe in this salvation. Justification is not a word that turns a blind eye to a person's sin; it is a word grounded in the salvation by which God actually removed sin. Because the eternal Lord bore once and for all even the sins we would commit in the future, all the sins we commit throughout our lives are, before God, sins previously committed. This faith does not make void the law; on the contrary, because it acknowledges that Jesus received all the judgment the law demanded, it establishes the law.

Have the same faith as Abraham

Abraham, though he knew that his own body and Sarah's womb were as good as dead, believed that God would accomplish what He had promised. His faith was not an expectation that some possibility still remained in him, but a reliance on the One who would fulfill His word, because God had spoken it. To a person who works, wages are not grace but what is rightfully his due; but the blessed person is the one to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works. The reason Paul conveys Abraham's faith to us is so that we, too, would place the basis of our faith not in our own circumstances but in the salvation God has accomplished.

"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).

The Lord died because He had received our offenses passed on to Him, and He rose again in order to justify us. Therefore, the Savior we believe in is Jesus Christ, who remitted our sins and is alive even now. Since the price of sin has already been paid, what more could we add in order to become righteous? Prayers of repentance, service, or good deeds cannot be added as the price of salvation. Faith, too, is not a matter of piling up new merit, but of receiving into our hearts today the salvation Jesus accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We did not become sinners by committing sins; we were born sinners through the disobedience of one man, Adam, and to us, such as we were, the righteousness obtained through the obedience of one Man, Jesus, was given. As the word says, *"Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20),* the person who knows that he is exceedingly sinful becomes exceedingly righteous. Therefore, we must not think,

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because of a fault exposed today, that even the righteousness the Lord accomplished has collapsed; rather, we must acknowledge a wrong as wrong before the word, while believing in the salvation that has remitted even that sin. The peace we enjoy with God is not a sense of relief that arises from being satisfied with our own works, but the peace that comes from the fact that the sin between God and us has been resolved.

The person who died with Christ and lives again

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3).

Contained in the word that we were baptized into Christ is the faith that accepts, as one's own salvation, the fact that our sins passed on to Jesus. The person who believes that his own sins, too, passed on to Jesus in the baptism He received from John confesses that he died with Christ, because he believes that when the Lord died bearing that sin, the judgment for his own sins also came to an end along with His death. He also believes that, because the Lord rose again from death, he who believes in this salvation has also received new life. Union is not a ceremony or a feeling; it is the faith that joins our hearts to what Jesus has done.

How could a person who has been saved from sin in this way regard continuing to serve sin as grace? Paul exhorts us to present ourselves to God as those who are alive from the dead, and this does not mean that we should present our bodies in order to become righteous; it means that, because Jesus delivered us from sin and gave us new life, we should serve God with that life. Though the weakness of the flesh remains, we are not under law but under grace, so sin can no longer have dominion over us,

and Christ dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit and leads us to live according to the word. Now, instead of displaying our own righteousness, we can show forth Jesus Christ, who has given us life, and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. As the word says, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*, eternal life is not a wage received by reckoning up that service, but the gift of God received in the Lord.

I hope that, through the word in this volume, you will engrave on your hearts how we who were under sin have become righteous. The answer lies in Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John and thereby had all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, transferred to Him once and for all, who shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the judgment for those sins, and who rose again from death. To believe in this salvation that He accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to believe in the righteousness of God. Come before God relying on the word that has justified us. For the basis of that word does not lie in our changing works, but in Jesus Christ, who has remitted all our sins. ✉

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CHAPTER

1

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

A servant of Christ lives by the grace he has received

< Romans 1:1–7 >

"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The calling of God that determined the life of a servant

What we should live for becomes clear when we know to whom we belong. If, even after receiving the remission of sins, we set the purpose of our lives following only our own thoughts, we are thinking of the rest of our lives as something separate from Jesus, who saved us through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. At the beginning of his epistle, Paul makes known together to whom his life belongs and what

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it is for. In that confession, the grace that saved Paul and the work entrusted to him by that grace are joined together.

"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1). Paul introduces himself as a servant of Jesus Christ, and he also finds the reason he became an apostle in his calling. A servant is one who works according to his master's will, and an apostle is one who has been sent. Therefore, Paul's office was not the result of a goal he himself had set being approved by God, but a work God entrusted to him so that he would preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because the One who called him was Jesus Christ, Paul put God's gospel of the water and the Spirit ahead of his own name and honor.

In particular, we must see the purpose of life in the words that he was separated to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For Paul, the office of apostle was not an end in itself but was for preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit entrusted to him, and he lived for that gospel of the water and the Spirit. For us, too, the grace that gave us the remission of sins teaches us what to fill our remaining time with. Since God saved us and made us know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, serving that gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a burden separate from grace but a precious work that a person who has received grace is to undertake. The work of looking after our livelihood and the labor entrusted to us also become clear in meaning when we think of them within the purpose of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

To live as a servant is not a matter of finding some usable righteousness in oneself and presenting it to one's master. Because God, who sent Paul, first saved him and even gave him the word to preach, Paul was able to work relying on that word. Jesus, Paul's Master, was the One who, through the baptism He

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received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes not only Paul's sins but all the sin of mankind, transferred to Him once and for all, who paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and who rose again from death; so the righteousness a servant would present to his master was not needed from the beginning. We, too, must not try to make for ourselves the qualification to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit while looking at our shortcomings, but must believe in the grace of Jesus, who saved us from sin in that way. Because the more we know what that grace is, the clearer the purpose for which He called us becomes, Paul immediately explains the content of the gospel of the water and the Spirit entrusted to him.

Believe in the salvation promised beforehand in the Scriptures

"Which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son" (Romans 1:2–3). The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Paul preaches is the news concerning the Son whom God had already promised through the prophets. If it were a teaching that began from human thinking, it could be corrected by another way of thinking, but the promise of God must be known according to the word of the One who gave that promise. Therefore, in order to know the salvation Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John, shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rising again from death, we must also look at how God first promised the remission of sins. The promise of the Old Testament and the fulfillment of the New Testament testify of the same Savior.

In the law of sacrifice God established are contained the fact that a sinner cannot wash away his sins by his own merit and

God's will to let him obtain the remission of sins through the sacrificial offering. *"Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:4)*. The sinner passed his sins on by laying his hands on the head of an unblemished offering, and the offering that received those sins died in the sinner's place. The reason the blood of the offering was needed is that there is judgment for sin, and the reason the laying on of hands came before it was to make clear whose sins the offering bears and dies for in his place. Only when we see the laying on of hands and the blood of the sacrifice together can we know the meaning of the atonement God established.

This promise points to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God did not make the sinner pay the price of sin by mending his own life, but showed beforehand the salvation in which Jesus would bear sin and become the sacrificial offering. Therefore, if we push aside the law of sacrifice of the Old Testament as a thing of the past, it also becomes blurred why Jesus had to receive baptism from John to have sins passed on to Him and shed His blood on the Cross. Paul preached the promised salvation and the salvation actually accomplished by connecting the two, and we, too, must believe in the remission of sins accomplished in the way God established.

Do not forget, either, the fact that the center of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is about His Son, Jesus Christ. The promise of the Scriptures does not make us boast of how excellent we will become, but turns our hearts toward Jesus, who was to come for us. What a person who hopes for the remission of sins needs is not to raise his own resolve but to know what Christ has done. Since God gave the promise and even made clear the main figure of that promise, we must not try to make a

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salvation that suits ourselves, but must believe in Jesus, who came according to the promise.

The Son of God, who is our Savior

"Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:3–4). The word that Jesus was born of the seed of David makes clear that the Son of God put on human flesh and actually came to this earth. David was a king, and Jesus is the Savior who came through his line. Jesus was not One who only looked at man's circumstances from afar; just as in the Old Testament a sacrificial offering was needed to which the sins of the people could be passed on, He came to have our sins transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John. But because of the fact that He came in the flesh, we must not think of Jesus as One confined to human ability. For Jesus is fundamentally God.

Paul goes on to speak of the Spirit of holiness and the power by which He rose again from death. The expression "the Spirit of holiness" means that Jesus is the holy Son of God, who is originally without sin. If One who is without sin died, that death cannot have been because of His own sin; it can only have been a death in which He had the sins of others transferred to Him. Just as the offering of the Old Testament received the sinner's sins through the laying on of hands, Jesus, who is without sin, received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all. If the laying on of hands was the procedure for passing sins on to the offering, the baptism He

received from John was the event that passed the sin of all mankind on to the Son of God.

Just as the offering that had sins passed on to it had to shed its blood, Jesus, who bore the sin of the world, was also nailed to the Cross. The blood He shed there was not because of Jesus' own sin but was the judgment for our sins that had been passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and Jesus received that judgment in our place. Since One who is without sin received all the judgment for the sin of the world and rose again from the dead, Jesus is God of power and the Savior who delivered us from sin and death. The baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection are not three facts to be believed separately but are joined together as one salvation, and this is the reason Paul preaches Jesus as our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we say the sin of the world, it may sound as though our sins are outside of it, but the sins that you and I commit throughout our lives are that very sin of the world. Neither the sins we have committed so far nor the sins we will commit in the future because of our weakness lie outside the sin Jesus had passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John. Therefore, faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a resolution to complete the remission of sins later, but faith that accepts as the Savior the Son of God, who removed all sins according to the promise. Rather than looking at our faults and striving to make salvation over again, we must look at the salvation that Jesus, who is without sin, accomplished by bearing our sins.

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The office received by grace is for the gospel

"Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name" (Romans 1:5). The grace and apostleship Paul received both came through Jesus Christ. His own being saved was the merit of Jesus, who is God, and his having become able to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others was also the grace He gave. Therefore, he could not make the office of apostle a ground for exalting his own righteousness, but had to use it for the name of Jesus, who sent him. When we know by whose grace we work, it also becomes clear whom we must reveal.

The object of the work entrusted to Paul was all the Gentiles, and its purpose was to have them believe and obey. Since the sin Jesus had passed on to Him when He received baptism from John was not the sin of one nation but the sin of the world, and the price He paid by shedding His blood on the Cross was also the price of that sin of the world, this salvation is not news to be preached only to certain people. Paul preached this salvation Jesus accomplished to people who had not known Christ and brought them to believe the word of God. When they accept in their hearts the Savior who removed their sins, they become people who obey the salvation of God. If we seek the beginning of obedience in the improvement of deeds, apart from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we miss the grace Paul preached.

Do not change the words about believing and obeying into the meaning that we must first become excellent servants in order to receive the remission of sins. Paul himself worked for His name after receiving grace through Christ, and the people he preached to also had to believe in the same grace. The work entrusted to us, likewise, is not to make people submit to us ourselves but to make known the salvation Jesus accomplished.

When the one who preaches the word puts the Savior's grace ahead of his own labor, those who hear also come to believe in the salvation of God, not in human righteousness.

Because we have received this grace, we regard as precious the matter of other people hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For just as we needed salvation, those still bound by sin also need the salvation of Jesus. Even if the office received and the work entrusted differ from one another, the purpose of serving for the name of Christ is the same. Lay down the heart that seeks recognition by putting forward its own labor, and set your heart on clearly preaching what Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did for sinners: receiving baptism from John, shedding His blood on the Cross to pay the price of sin, and rising again. It is the proper life of a servant that one who has received grace conveys that grace to others.

The assurance that we are people who belong to Christ

"Among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:6). After speaking of only himself as a servant of Christ, Paul does not leave the saints in Rome outside. He makes clear that they, who were among the Gentiles, were also called to belong to Jesus Christ. The apostle who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the people who believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit belong to the same Savior. It is not a relationship in which one side has the qualification and the other side must still add its own righteousness; rather, all have become the people of God through the salvation Jesus bestowed.

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The fact that we belong to Christ makes clear where our lives belong. Neither the degree to which we are recognized by people nor the circumstances we are now in decides whose people we are. Our Master is Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood of the Cross, and then rose again from death. Therefore, we live hearing His word and seeking His help. Even when we are discouraged because of the shortcomings of the flesh, we can believe in the salvation that Jesus, our Master, bestowed in that way, and when we lack the strength to undertake the work entrusted to us, we can rely on the Lord's care.

The assurance that we belong to Christ is not a word that lets us live as we please without any purpose. Just as Paul was sent for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it makes us, too, use the rest of our lives according to our Master's will. It is turning from the heart that lived only to fulfill its own wishes to caring also about the matter of other people obtaining the remission of sins. We do not serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit in order to be saved; because we already belong to Christ, we regard the work of Christ as precious. When we rightly know the order of belonging and serving, we do not treat our labor as the price of salvation, and yet we do not take lightly the work entrusted to us.

Even at times when we feel, as we live in the world, that our strength is small, this belonging does not change. Jesus, our Master, called us to be His own people, and we can follow Him step by step relying on Him. Instead of striving to make yourselves look great, believe in the power of the Lord, who saved us and rose again from death. Just as Paul, when he spoke of the grace he had received, also included the saints in Rome together with himself, we, too, must regard as precious those

who have received the same salvation and serve the Lord together.

The peace given to the beloved saints

"To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:7). Paul calls them all who are beloved of God and called to be saints. The name "saints" is not praise that their flesh has become perfect, but means that they are people whom Jesus made holy by having the sin of the world, which includes their sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and by shedding His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin. Therefore, the basis of that name is not in human effort but in the love God bestowed first. If we, too, are people who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must not live as though we had nothing to do with God, looking only at our own weakness.

The grace and peace he wishes for them come from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not that Paul himself is the source of blessing; rather, God, who saved them, bestows grace on His people and gives them peace. The relationship itself, in which we can call God Father and confess Jesus as our Lord, is a great grace. The circumstances of the world may still be difficult, but since the way to come to the Father is open and Jesus, who saved us, is there, it is clear whom we are to rely on in our hearts.

A person who enjoys this peace has no need to hide his sins and avoid God. Because he believes that the Savior, who received the judgment for all sins in his place on the Cross and rose again, is his own Master, he can acknowledge his wrongs

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and turn around according to the word. He can also ask for grace and peace for the saints who have received the same love. The reason Paul begins with his own calling and closes his greeting with the peace to be given to all the saints is also that the grace a servant of Christ has received must be conveyed to others.

When you are at a loss as to what to live for, remember who the Master is who called us. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, accomplished the promised salvation through the baptism He received from John, the blood He shed on the Cross, and His resurrection from death. Since He called us to be His own people, now follow His will relying on the grace you have received. It is not a life lived to prove our righteousness, but a life of serving Jesus Christ, who gave us life. We who are servants of Christ can live preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit our Master gave us, in the grace and peace that come from the Father. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The life that comes by faith

< Romans 1:1–17 >

"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach

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the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"

How hard you must be laboring, serving the Lord and quietly undertaking your offices, each in your own place! Having done the ministry myself, I keenly feel that keeping one's place is in itself a truly precious and great thing. Believing in the Lord and living while keeping one's position is by no means an easy thing. That we can meet again like this is also the grace of God. By our own strength we can neither live nor do the ministry. Everything is the Lord's grace and the Lord's power. If the Lord does not hold us, we can do nothing and cannot even go on living. We are that weak, and at every moment God's care and love are absolutely necessary to us. Like little children, we are being cared for by God. Because God gave birth to us, washes us, feeds us, clothes us, holds us in His arms, gives us grace in due season, fills what we lack, and continually clothes us with love, we are alive here now.

The grace needed even more after being born again

After receiving the remission of sins, we are at first filled with joy. Saying, "I have received the remission of sins!" we take the lead in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but as the years go by, we come to feel deeply

why our strength drains away like this, why we are so weak and lacking, and why there is still so much that is evil in us. But even at that very moment, the Lord does not give up on us. His mercy and grace hold us and lead us day by day. That He caused us to receive the remission of sins is also the grace of God, but the life after that needs greater mercy and compassion, more grace and power, love and blessing. As we live in the Lord after being born again, as the years go by we come to realize that we cannot live without more of God's help. Just as a child needs more care as it grows, after we have received the remission of sins, the more our faith grows, the more dangerous moments there are, and without attentive care we can easily stumble, be hurt, and fall. Just as a baby that only needed to be given milk, once it begins to walk, must be looked after constantly by locking the doors and putting up nets, we, too, need God's meticulous care at every moment.

Our God neither slumbers nor sleeps. He always looks upon our hearts, our circumstances, and our weaknesses; He has led us until now, and He will lead us forever in the future as well. As the years go by, as the ministry grows larger and the church grows, the grace of God is needed all the more urgently. Grace keeps coming upon us when we are in the Lord. If we do not remain in faith, we fall away from grace. God surely clothes with grace those who believe in and rely on the Lord. Therefore, all of us now need more of God's grace. On pastors, on saints, and on the whole church, God's continual grace and power must be poured out. As long as we remain in the Lord, God will clothe us with grace and lead us to the end.

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It is God who chooses the servants of God

In Romans chapter 1, Paul boldly confesses himself to be *"a bondservant of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1)*. He was called to be an apostle and was one separated to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. An 'apostle' is one sent from God, and Paul was sent as God's ambassador to preach the gospel to this world. The servants of God who serve the Lord today are the same. We are servants of no one else but servants of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul was not the only apostle; all the servants who have been called through the church are also those sent from God. God sent us into this world for the gospel, for the work of God. Within us there are various gifts. In the church, too, there are servants with various gifts, and when these gifts are used rightly within the faith of a servant, it is a truly precious and blessed thing. In conclusion, we must clearly remember that all of us are servants of God for the gospel and those who have been sent, and we must live worthy of that calling.

A servant of God is not something one becomes by his own choosing; rather, God chooses and sets him apart. Just as men are conscripted into the army, the servants of God for the gospel of the water and the Spirit are also chosen and called directly by God. This is not something that comes about by mere volunteering or zeal. When Jesus was on this earth, a certain man said, *"Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go" (Matthew 8:19)*, but the Lord sent him back, saying that *"the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20)*. On the other hand, to a certain man He said directly, calling him, *"Follow Me" (Matthew 8:22)*. In other words, it is God who chooses first. One does not become a servant of God just because he wants to. In the church, too, God calls each person by appointing him exactly, as if conscripting him.

Some say, "I cannot do it; I am not qualified," but God uses a person not because he is useful but because He has chosen him. If a person chosen by God denies himself and gives himself up completely, anyone can be used preciously. But a person who cannot give himself up, a person whose own will is still alive, will never be used in the end no matter how much training he receives and no matter how much he is beaten. Only one who puts himself to death and obeys the will of God can be used as a servant of God.

"Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1). Paul clearly confesses himself to be a servant of Jesus Christ and one called to be an apostle. An apostle is one sent from God, and that calling is not something he chose for himself but is by God's choosing. One does not become a servant of God by oneself. God Himself chooses and calls him for the gospel of the water and the Spirit and for the church. Jesus, too, told some to follow Him, and when the man who had been demon-possessed begged to be with Him, He did not allow it but told him to return home. Thus God's calling is exact and is accomplished without mistake. There is no regret in God's choosing. Even though we look weak and lacking, God chose us knowing all of that. Therefore, rather than being discouraged at our own shortcomings, we must deny ourselves and obey by faith in order to be used preciously. Unless we put ourselves to death, we can never be used.

Have the heart of a servant in the church

A saint is a servant from the moment he is saved. The heart that comes to church wanting only to receive good things without any burden—that is, the attitude of regarding oneself as the master—makes it difficult to serve the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit. Jesus is the King, and we are those called to be His holy servants. In the church, the posture of a servant is the posture of serving. A person who thinks he is the master always clashes with others and feels uncomfortable in the church. But a person who has the heart that says, "I am a servant," asks, "What can I help with?" and "What work should I take on?" and serves with joy, and undertakes whatever work there is with thankfulness.

Just being used by God is in itself something to be thankful for. For example, just as one is glad simply to be picked at a recruitment of day laborers, the very fact of having been picked for God's work is grace and blessing. Whether it is washing dishes, wiping the floor, or preaching the gospel, all are precious work of God and the mission of a servant. In conclusion, what matters is the fact that we have been picked, that we have been chosen. Even work that seems trivial is, in the gospel, a mission equal to the preaching of the word. We were called as servants, and as servants we must undertake the Lord's work with joy and thankfulness.

The gospel promised beforehand and the office received from the Lord

In Romans 1:2, the apostle Paul says that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is that "*which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son" (Romans 1:2–3)*. In other words, the gospel did not appear suddenly; it is the fulfillment of the promise God prophesied through the prophets from the time of the Old Testament. The coming of Jesus Christ and the gospel of the remission of sins are the word prophesied continually from Adam onward until

the New Testament, and this is God's plan and promise. The apostle Paul confirms this gospel not through his own thoughts or experience but through the Old Testament Scriptures. He had received a thorough education in the law under Gamaliel and was a man who knew the Old Testament better than anyone. So whenever Paul preached the gospel, he always explained and testified of it on the basis of the Old Testament, and because of this, even the Jews could not refute his words.

Jesus Christ is, according to the flesh, a descendant of David, and according to the Spirit of holiness, He was confirmed to be the Son of God by His resurrection. He is our Lord Jesus Christ, and through Him we have received grace and apostleship. This work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit and bringing those among the Gentiles to believe and obey is all through Jesus Christ. We, too, are those called to belong to Jesus Christ. The mission and office we have received were given not by our ability but entirely by the grace of the Lord. Therefore, we must live a life of preaching the gospel by the grace the Lord has given, for the name of the Lord. Our having become servants of God is not because of people or circumstances but entirely through Jesus Christ. Our being separated to the gospel and our receiving the office of serving the Lord were both given by the grace of the Lord. Just as was promised beforehand in the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had all the sins of the world passed on to Him when He received baptism from John, received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so remitted our sins completely.

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We belong to Christ

In the world there are many self-proclaimed servants of God, but the true servants of God are only those who have been born again and called through the church. We are among them, those called to belong to Jesus Christ. Romans 1:6 says, *"Among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:6)*. In my own case, too, as I preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I came to talk for hours with whomever I met, and in the midst of that, seeing people receive the remission of sins and be changed, I realized that this was my path. While I was reading the Bible, this word came deeply to my heart: *"You also are the called of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:6)*. This word showed me that God's calling for my life was certain.

Whose am I? I belong to Jesus Christ. This calling is our identity. All of us are those called to belong to Jesus Christ, and those separated to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we must give thanks for this grace and devote ourselves to a life of preaching the gospel. "Who am I?"—we belong to Christ. We are not our own, nor do we belong to the world. We are the possession of Jesus Christ. From the moment I realized this fact, the direction of my life changed, and I put down the things I had been going to do and came to live as the Lord's servant, a life for the gospel. The word of Romans 1:6, *"Among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:6)*—this word came deeply into my heart, and the assurance that I had been called as the Lord's possession gave boldness and strength to my life.

It is all right even if the people of the world do not know me. I belong to the King of kings, I am a servant of God, and I belong to Christ. The world's evaluation is not important. We are those who represent the kingdom of God, and we must live above the

world with pride and dignity. A person who has received the remission of sins has pride. This is not arrogance but a right understanding of one's status and an expression of faith. We are the people of the Creator, and in the future, in the kingdom of heaven, even the angels will become those who serve us.

Now is the time of training. The life of faith on this earth is a rehearsal for the kingdom of heaven. If we regard ourselves as servants here and now and live cowed in the face of the world, we will not be able to properly take up the place of a master in the kingdom of heaven. But a person who has the qualification of a master is welcomed by the angels in the kingdom of heaven. He lived boldly for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and even the angels will serve him proudly, saying, "Master, you truly were a son of the King." We belong to Christ. We are no longer servants of the world but those who have the qualification of masters above all things. We who believe in Jesus Christ and have received the remission of sins are sons of God, the people of the King, and servants of the King. There is no reason to live crushed by the things of the world. If we have faith, we can live richly even in lack, freely and boldly.

The difference in faith shows in one's way of life. Some people live in constant want even though they have much property, and some live joyfully and boldly even with little. One who has faith uses what he has to give glory to God and lives as one who rules above the world. The born-again must live not like servants but like masters. Wherever one's workplace may be, one must live a life that becomes a channel for the gospel. Through our workplaces, we can lead people before the gospel, work together by faith, and take part in the work of salvation. We must make money a means and use it as a channel for spreading the faith.

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We are people who are above all things. Just as the Jews had pride in being God's chosen people, those who have received the remission of sins must have pride. We are the people of the Creator, the possession of the King of kings, and beings who are spiritually above the world. Pride in one's faith becomes the power to preach the gospel. The attitude of a person of faith, who boldly boasts of the church and the servants of God and knows how to speak accurately of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, becomes a power that makes the people of the world come, thinking, "There is something in that church."

The spiritual grace Paul wanted to impart

In Romans 1:7, the apostle Paul says, *"To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:7)*. Dear fellow believers, true grace and peace come only from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. They cannot be compared with the peace the world gives. The reason we can truly be at peace is the grace of God, and the peace He gives is true peace. Therefore, lean on God, and believe in and follow the Lord. Then the Lord gives grace and peace.

From verse 8 on, Paul always prays thinking of the saints in Rome and gives thanks that their faith has been made known throughout the whole world. He earnestly asks to go to Rome in the will of God. For he wanted to impart a spiritual gift there to establish them, and to be comforted together with them through faith. At that time, Rome was the center that led to the whole world. So Paul wanted to go to Rome because, if he preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit in Rome, the gospel could be spread to the whole world. The reason Paul wrote the epistle

to the church in Rome was not merely to exchange greetings but to preach Jesus Christ, whom he had met—that is, the gospel—and to share spiritual grace.

What is the *"spiritual gift" (Romans 1:11)* spoken of here? The spiritual gift Paul speaks of is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so remitted all our sins. The grace of God contained in the gospel, true blessing, the remission of sins, justification, and the right to become children of God—all of these are spiritual grace. Paul wanted to share this gospel with the saints and thereby make their faith even firmer. Before I was born again, I, too, thought that the *"spiritual gift"* Paul spoke of was some special spiritual experience or supernatural phenomenon. But no matter how much I searched, it was not such a thing. Only after receiving the remission of sins did I realize it—that receiving the remission of sins through faith in Jesus Christ and becoming a child of God is the true spiritual grace.

Dear fellow believers, it is not a phenomenon like an experience of flashing fire or the appearance of an angel; rather, receiving the remission of sins and being saved by believing in Jesus Christ—this is the spiritual grace of heaven. This gospel of the water and the Spirit that we have received—there is nothing more spiritual than this grace. Dear fellow believers, by believing in Jesus, sinners have become righteous. Those who were to go to hell have come to enter the kingdom of heaven. How could this not be spiritual grace! The spiritual grace of heaven is precisely that we have been saved and justified through the gospel.

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The apostle Paul shares this spiritual grace very abundantly through the Book of Romans. If there had been no epistles of the apostle Paul, we would have had great difficulty believing in Jesus with only the four Gospels. For although the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be known through the four Gospels as well, the exact truth and doctrine were set in order more clearly through Paul's epistles. The apostles appointed Matthias as the successor of Judas Iscariot, but the Bible does not record anything about him afterward. Rather, the apostle whom the Lord Himself chose was Saul. Saul, who was called on the road to Damascus—that is, Paul—was one who had persecuted Jesus, but he realized that Jesus is the Son of God, repented, and was called to be an apostle. After that, Paul set in order and taught the spiritual grace, that is, the gospel, through numerous epistles.

A debtor has the responsibility to preach the gospel

The apostle Paul wanted to share this gospel of the water and the Spirit that he had received with the saints in Rome. He wanted to share the grace he had received and to be comforted together with them through faith. He also says in verse 14, *"I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise" (Romans 1:14)*. This means that Paul had the responsibility to preach the gospel to all people. As one who had received salvation from God, he had a debt to preach the gospel to all the people of the world. Dear fellow believers, we, too, as those who have received the love of God, have the responsibility to preach the gospel. If we do not preach, God holds us responsible for the destruction of those people. The Book of Ezekiel also says so. That is why the apostle Paul preached the

gospel to everyone he met, whether wise or unwise, whether Greek or barbarian, without discrimination.

But we often pick and choose the people to whom we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We try to preach only to those who listen well and those we like. But Paul was not like that. He preached the gospel even to people who were ignorant and materialistic like barbarians. Whether they hear the gospel and ignore it or mock it, we must clearly preach to them how Jesus bore sin. Even if they reject the gospel and go to hell, we must let them hear the gospel and reject it; we must not let them go to hell without knowing. We must let them know, let them realize, and let them choose. Dear fellow believers, let us all remember that, like the apostle Paul, we are debtors of the gospel. Whether we like them or not, whether they listen or not, we must preach this gospel tenaciously to all people. That is the rightful responsibility of those who have been saved and the mission of those who have received spiritual grace.

All the servants of God, including the apostle Paul, emphasized the fact that the responsibility to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit rests on us. Yet are we not preaching this gospel only within too narrow a range? Even if we cannot each preach the gospel directly to everyone, we must preach the gospel by whatever means and fulfill the responsibility we are able to. Of course, there are many who oppose, but nevertheless we must preach. For the responsibility to preach the gospel rests on us. My heart is heavy. For this gospel must be preached to all, but by my own strength I cannot do it all. I even think that I should go out into the streets and go about shouting the gospel. "Dear citizens, you must receive the remission of sins!" We must preach even in this way.

We must make known how Jesus removed our sins, and if they still do not accept it, there is nothing we can do. But we

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must do our best to preach. Otherwise, the price of their blood comes back on us. God will rebuke us, saying, “Why did you not speak? If you had preached, might that person not have received the remission of sins?” This is not merely doctrine. Whoever is born again has the responsibility to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we do not preach the gospel, that responsibility lies with us. Of course, even if people do not come and receive the remission of sins, that is their choice. But we must do our best to preach the gospel by faith. It is the same with our families. Even if they do not accept it, we must preach the gospel. If they hear and politely decline, that is their decision, and we cannot forcibly stop them. But if we do not preach, it is our responsibility.

The apostle Paul’s saying this word is an exhortation directed to us. How much are we preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Are our hearts perhaps too narrow? We must invest more time and material resources in preaching the gospel. We must not think only of our own church. We must look at the souls of all mankind and go out toward the whole world. The apostle Paul did not even marry and lived only for the gospel. Though he was beaten and persecuted countless times, he pressed forward. That he received forty stripes minus one five times according to the law of the Jews means that he endured truly severe suffering. The life of Paul, who lived for the gospel to that extent, is a challenge to us all. Dear fellow believers, should we not also live for the gospel in that way? We must widen our narrow field of vision and preach the gospel with the heart of God, with a heart that embraces the souls of the whole world. That responsibility rests on us, now.

We have the responsibility to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But sometimes our hearts become narrow, and we come to think that even when we preach the gospel, the person

must come to our church. But the gospel must be preached to all peoples. If there is someone who hears and accepts it, we need only lead him into the church. The work of preaching the gospel is directed toward the whole world, and far too many people have not yet heard this gospel. There are also many who say, "This is the first time in my life I have heard it." They have not received the remission of sins because they have not heard the gospel; if they hear it, they can receive it. Even if someone heard it once long ago, if he hears it again now, he can receive the remission of sins. That is why we must preach the gospel whenever we have the opportunity. I hope you will preach the gospel by whatever means, using every means you can. Those who have not yet heard must hear this news: that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of that sin in full by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and rose again from death on the third day, and so remitted all our sins.

Do not be ashamed of the gospel, but know it rightly

In Romans 1:16, the apostle Paul says, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16)*. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the power of God that gives certain salvation. "Can we be saved just by believing?" Yes, we are certainly saved. A gospel of the sort that says, "I believe, but we will have to wait and see," is not the biblical gospel. The true gospel gives certain salvation. The gospel is not something shameful; it is glory. We must preach the gospel boldly. Every time I go out to preach the gospel, I have this heart: "I must bestow grace on this

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person." For we do not know who will receive grace. For anyone who hears the word and only believes, the kingdom of heaven is guaranteed. The gospel is that clear a power.

But today the word 'gospel' is used far too commonly. Many people say, "Believe in Jesus; it is the gospel," but those who properly explain what the gospel is are rare. If you ask pastors, "What is the gospel?" they say only something like, "It is believing in Jesus and going to the kingdom of heaven." But when asked how one goes to the kingdom of heaven, they cannot answer. There are many times when we do not clearly know even the words we use often. The word 'salvation' is the same. People say, "I have been saved," but when asked whether they have sin, there are also many cases where they answer, "I do." If so, have they really been saved? Like this, many people are living a life of faith without knowing accurately even the concepts of the gospel and salvation. But we are different. We are those who have the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are those who have been saved. We have become Jesus Christ's and are those chosen by Him. We are the servants of God. Therefore, let us know this gospel correctly, preach it rightly, and go forward with assurance and boldness. That is the mission God has entrusted to us.

Romans 1:17 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)*. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the righteousness of God is revealed. This word clearly makes known the core of the gospel. If we do not know the righteousness of God, we do not know the gospel. Therefore, in order to preach the true gospel, we must first know what the righteousness of God is.

Not long ago, a seminary student visited our church. We talked politely, and when he said he was studying the theology

of a certain denomination, I asked him this: "Do you call that theology?" I said so because I am a person who readily speaks out frankly. That theology is based on Arminianism, and it is hard to regard it as biblical theology. That student, too, confessed, "Honestly, it is not right," to my question, "Is that theology right?" In fact, it is said that some professors at that school advocate religious pluralism and even teach that there is salvation in every religion. But even within it there are a few students who long for the truth, and they pray for such professors and hold on to the right faith. That student was also one of them.

He said that he would become a missionary and preach the gospel in the future. I said, "That is a truly precious resolution," and asked again, "Excuse me, but do you know what the gospel is?" Then he was flustered and answered, "The gospel is the gospel; is there something separate about it?" He thought I was picking a quarrel and opened his eyes wide, and when I asked, "It says that in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed; do you know what that righteousness of God is?" he instead flared up, saying, "I am a seminary student; do you think I would not know even that?"

Like this, even those who attend seminary and dream of missions may not actually know the essence of the gospel, that is, what the righteousness of God is. The gospel does not end simply with the words "Believe in Jesus and go to the kingdom of heaven." The gospel of the water and the Spirit means the righteousness of God revealed to us, that is, the work of redemption of God in which Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so completely resolved our sins. The one who knows and believes in this righteousness is saved.

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Therefore, we must not regard the gospel as a mere slogan, but must know and believe it as the word of life in which the righteousness of God is revealed, and preach it boldly. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Do not be ashamed of the gospel of salvation

< Romans 1:8–17 >

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”

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Rejoice in the faith of the saints and seek the way

Even after hearing the news that the saints in Rome already believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Paul wanted to go to them and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit again. Why would he have tried to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit when there were already people who believed? It was because, to Paul, the gospel of the water and the Spirit was not knowledge that one hears when first being saved and then passes by, but the power of God that makes the heart firm and enables one to live the rest of one's life. Jesus received baptism from John in order to have the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all, He shed His blood on the Cross in order to pay the price of that sin, and by rising again from death He completed that salvation. This gospel of the water and the Spirit was the word that even those who had already believed had to keep continually in their hearts. At the center of the meeting that he gave thanks for and sought, too, was that very gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:8). What Paul gave thanks for was not that the saints in Rome had accomplished splendid things and exalted their own names, but that their faith had become known throughout the whole world. As the word says that he thanked God through Jesus Christ, the source of that faith lay in Jesus the Savior. Paul regarded as precious the fact that even in places he had not yet been able to visit, people were believing in the same salvation. We, too, when we see another person's faith, should give thanks to God, who saved that person, rather than comparing him with ourselves.

That thanksgiving led to prayer in which he did not forget in his heart the people far away but brought them before God. In verse 9, Paul says that he serves God with his spirit, and he places that service within the gospel of the water and the Spirit of God's Son, Jesus Christ. That gospel of the water and the Spirit is the news that Jesus Christ, the King of kings, bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rose again from death. Since even labor offered to God must be clear as to what one believes and for whom one does it, Paul made clear that the center of his heart was in this gospel of the Son, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished for the remission of the sin of mankind. What mattered more to Paul than outwardly meeting many people was whether this salvation was being conveyed to them.

Also, in verse 10, Paul did not push his own will but wanted to find a good way in the will of God. The fact that his heart was earnest to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the faith that it is God who opens the way were together in him. We easily give up in our hearts when the way does not open even though we have a wish, but Paul kept remembering the saints and sought from God the way to go to them. To hold in prayer a heart that cares for the souls of others and to actually look for a way to share the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the life of serving God with one's spirit.

The spiritual gift that establishes the heart

"For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—" (Romans 1:11). The spiritual gift Paul intended to impart to them was the gospel

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of the water and the Spirit, that is, the gospel in which Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so completely removed that sin. He intended to preach this truth of the remission of sins, which God gives freely, and so establish their hearts firmly upon salvation. If, on hearing the word spiritual, one first looks for visible, astonishing phenomena or special experiences, one misses Paul's meaning. Speaking in tongues or ecstatic experiences are not the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit; the evidence is that one has received the remission of sins in one's heart by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The reason even saints who already believe need this gospel of the water and the Spirit is that our hearts are easily caught by the shortcomings of the flesh. Even after hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sins, there are times when we look at our own conduct and become discouraged, and then it is easy to think as though even our salvation were incomplete. What is needed at that time is not a more intense experience, but to know clearly once again the work of Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place on the Cross, and then rose again. When we know that the basis of salvation does not lie in ourselves, we can rely on the salvation Jesus accomplished even while acknowledging our shortcomings.

"That is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me" (Romans 1:12). Paul did not speak only of establishing the saints; he also wanted to be encouraged himself by their faith. When we meet someone who believes in the same salvation, there is comfort in our hearts not

because that person's circumstances are impressive, but because of Jesus, on whom he relies. Since neither the apostle who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit nor the saints who believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are people who live by their own ability, they gain strength by thinking together of the Lord's salvation. The expression that they would be encouraged together carries the meaning that the fellowship of faith is not something in which one side only gives.

In such fellowship there is no need to pretend not to know each other's faults, nor any need to make one's own righteousness look great. Because the One who saved us, who have faults, is the same, we can acknowledge our wrongs and set our hearts right by His word. Also, if there is someone who does not yet clearly know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must preach the basis of the remission of sins to him as well. The meeting Paul wanted was one in which no one thinks he knows all the truth of salvation merely because he is in the church, but everyone believes in the grace Jesus bestowed and finds rest.

The debt of the gospel to be preached to all people

"Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles" (Romans 1:13). Paul reveals that he had often planned to go to Rome but had been hindered until now. Even so, he did not want the saints to be unaware of that heart of his that had wanted to go. The reason he had wanted to go was so that he might have fruit in Rome also, just as among the other Gentiles. Since the fruit Paul hoped for was that those who heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit would believe, receive the

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remission of sins, and stand firm in that faith, even when the way was hindered he did not change the gospel of the water and the Spirit he was to preach or the purpose for which he wanted to go.

"I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also" (Romans 1:14–15). When Paul said he was a debtor to all people, he was speaking of the responsibility to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. Since he himself had freely received the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and had been indebted to the labor of those who had preached that gospel of the water and the Spirit to him, he now wanted to preach to others what he had received. He could not be satisfied with knowing that grace by himself when there were still people who had not heard. Repaying this debt is not an act of paying God the price of salvation, but a service to enable others also to receive the salvation one received first.

We must also look at why Paul listed different kinds of people side by side and said he was a debtor to all of them. It means that he did not divide the people to whom he would preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit according to what culture and language they had or how much they had learned. Even one who seems wise cannot remove his sins with his own knowledge, and even one who seems lacking is not excluded from Jesus' salvation. Everyone needs the remission of sins. In the sin of the world that Jesus had passed on to Him when He received baptism from John, the sins of the Greeks and the sins of the barbarians were included without exception, and the blood He shed on the Cross was the blood by which He received, in their place, the judgment all those people were to receive.

Therefore, we must not decide by a person's outward appearance who is qualified to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

That is why Paul wanted to preach, as much as he could, to the saints in Rome as well. He hoped that by sharing together the grace they had received, their faith would become firmer, and that the news would reach those who did not yet know the truth of salvation. We, too, need this kind of desire toward the souls of others. Even if the way you want does not open right away, seek the way from God and take up the service you can do now. One who remembers the debt of the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not stop at calculating only his own circumstances but comes to pray for others to be saved.

The gospel is the power that saves everyone who believes

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Romans 1:16). The reason Paul was not ashamed of the gospel of the water and the Spirit was not that his own speaking skill was outstanding, but that the gospel of the water and the Spirit actually saves from sin those who believe. People's fine words can comfort the heart for a moment, but they cannot do away with the price of sin. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit contains the fact that Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, ended that judgment with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death—that is, the work by which God actually resolved our sins—whoever believes that word in his heart receives the remission of sins. The power of the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit is entirely different from a force that excites people for a moment.

If we do not clearly know what this power is, we try to measure God's salvation by worldly success or changes in the flesh. But Paul said that the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives salvation to everyone who believes. The problem of sin that remained in our hearts is resolved simply by looking to and believing in the work Jesus finished by dying on the Cross and rising again, and the person who used to avoid God because of sin comes to draw near to God with a clean conscience. It is not that the flesh suddenly becomes perfect so that we are assured of the remission of sins; rather, our hearts become clean by relying on, looking to, and believing in the Savior, who bore our sins.

In the words everyone who believes, look at both the object of faith and the scope of salvation. It does not mean that any teaching gives salvation as long as one's faith is earnest while believing only in the blood of the Cross; it means that the power of God works in the one who properly knows and believes in that gospel of the water and the Spirit which Paul preached. Also, the word that it is for the Jew first and also for the Greek makes clear the fact that it does not stop at the salvation of one nation. Since the salvation God gives is the same for everyone who believes in the same gospel of the water and the Spirit, we cannot preach separately an easier salvation or a harder salvation depending on the person.

This power is also what we must rely on when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we went to boast of our own deeds, we would be afraid that our faults might be exposed, but the one who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies not of his own deeds but of the work of Jesus, who saved sinners through the baptism He received from John, the blood of

the Cross, and the resurrection. Because we ourselves have no ability to remove sin, we preach Jesus' salvation, and we also urge those who hear to believe in that salvation. Do not confuse your own shortcomings with the power of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We can boldly preach to others the same word on which we relied to receive the remission of sins.

The righteousness of God is the salvation by which He removed sin

"*In it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17)*. The righteousness of God is the right thing God did for us, the merit by which He saved sinners. People try to establish righteousness with their own good deeds and religious zeal, but those deeds cannot receive in their place the judgment for the sins they have already committed. The righteousness revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not an achievement that man has offered up to God, but the salvation God bestowed on us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Therefore, if one thinks that salvation becomes more complete the more one adds one's own righteousness, one changes the basis of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God's rightness lies not in having simply covered sin over, but in having actually removed sin. That work began with the sin of the world being passed on to Jesus. When Jesus Christ, the Son of God, received baptism from John, He had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and our sins were among them. Since He who had the sins passed on to Him was hung on the Cross, the blood He shed there is the blood by which He received in our place the judgment for sin that we had to receive. And by His rising again from death, God showed that

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this salvation is complete. The righteousness of God points precisely to the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Then are the sins we are committing now and the sins we will commit in the future left out of the sin of the world? No, they are not. Those sins, too, are the sin of the world, and so they are sins Jesus has already borne. If we divide them, saying that only past sins have been remitted and that we must wash away future sins separately, we are reducing with our own hands the scope of the sins Jesus bore. Do not add your own prayers of repentance or your promises to do better from now on to the basis of the remission of sins. It is right for us to acknowledge our wrongs and turn around, but we cannot make that a method of paying the price of sin. The merit of Jesus, who resolved all sins, makes us righteous.

When Paul said that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is a word telling us to believe precisely in this work. Because one cannot preach complete salvation if one speaks only of the death on the Cross and leaves out how our sins were passed on to Jesus, the gospel of the water and the Spirit always preaches the baptism He received from John together with the blood of the Cross. One who believes in the righteousness of God does not hold on to his own merit but relies on the fact that Jesus has removed all his sins.

Believe in the righteousness you have received and live by it today as well

The word Paul brought in, saying that it is written, is the word God had already spoken through the prophet Habakkuk.

"But the just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). The one who has been saved by believing in the righteousness of God in his heart lives by faith thereafter as well. The faith Paul speaks of is not a thought by which one braces one's own heart that things will go well without any ground, but accepting as true the work God has done and the word He has given. If one relied on Jesus when being saved but relies only on one's own strength and judgment when living, one forgets that God, who saved him, is still his God now.

Knowing the righteousness of God and believing in that righteousness as one's own salvation are not the same. If I have learned from the word that the baptism Jesus received from John was the event in which He had the sin of the world passed on to Him, I must accept that my sins were in that sin of the world; and if I have learned that the blood He shed on the Cross was the blood by which He received the judgment for that sin in my place, I must accept that that judgment was originally the judgment I was to receive. By faith that believes purely in that way, one comes to enjoy the grace of God. Thinking of the word that it is from faith to faith, do not leave the truth you have heard as someone else's story.

To live by this faith, we must know the fact that our old man died with Jesus and that in Him, who rose again from death, we have obtained new life. Since Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and was judged in our place on the Cross, we have no need to return to a life of trying to mend our former selves, who were sinners, in order to be approved by God. Because we have already been made righteous by the salvation Jesus accomplished, we can follow the living Savior without putting our own thoughts ahead of the word. We go forward not with a conviction that we have strength in ourselves, but with faith in Jesus, who has given us life.

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Even when our weakness is exposed, we must use this faith. Acknowledge what you have done wrong and turn around, but do not think that because of it the righteousness Jesus accomplished has collapsed. When we believe in the salvation by which even that sin was borne, we can rise from discouragement and ask God for help. Also, when the way is blocked while we serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we do not merely calculate the lack of our own ability but come to ask God for wisdom and a way. The word that the righteous shall live by faith is an exhortation to follow God in actual life as well, relying on the salvation we have received.

This is why Paul intended to go even to saints who already believed and share the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus, who received baptism from John and had our sins passed on to Him, received that judgment in our place with the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death, makes our hearts firm today as well, lets us encourage one another, and makes us care for other souls. Therefore, do not leave it as something that happened only when you first received the remission of sins, but believe in the righteousness of God and rely on the Lord today as well. Because we know the power of that salvation, we can preach without shame even to those who have not yet heard, and with those who believe together with us, we can gain strength within the same grace. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The righteousness of God

< Romans 1:16–17 >

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’”

The good news in which only God’s plaque of merit stands

How can we be ashamed of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? The apostle Paul, saying, *“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16),* testified of the gospel of the water and the Spirit confidently and boldly. But many people, even while believing in Jesus, are not confident; they are cowed and tell people to believe in Jesus in a halfhearted way. The Lord gave us His own flesh and blood and saved us, so what is there to be ashamed of? Is it not something to be bold about? The apostle Paul said that he was not ashamed of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Why was the apostle Paul not ashamed of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? First, it is because the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The word gospel is euangelion (εὐαγγέλιον) in Greek, which means good news. When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, an angel appeared that night to the shepherds who were tending

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their flocks out in the field and said, *"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14)*. This is the good news. It is that in heaven there is glory to God, and on earth there is peace to the people on whom His favor rests. That He saved us from sin and removed all our sins is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the good news. Jesus has removed all our sins. That the Lord bore all the sins of human beings, who live their whole lives wriggling like maggots in filthy places and committing sins in the dirt, and has removed them all—this is the good news God has given us. Among all the news we hear, the most joyful news is this gospel of the water and the Spirit. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is that Jesus has removed my sins and your sins, the sins of everyone in this world. That good news contains what Jesus did. Because Jesus had not only my sins and your sins but all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross. Jesus rose again from death and saved us, and so it is good news.

"In it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17). The apostle Paul said, first, that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our becoming righteous, becoming saints, obtaining eternal life, and becoming people without sin by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which our Lord removed our sins—this is that we have come to be saved because of the righteousness of God, by which God removed our sins. It is because of the righteousness of God.

People who do not know what the righteousness of God is set up a plaque of merit in their own hearts whenever they do just a little well or have just a little merit in some field. That is precisely human righteousness. Humans doing well and humans

establishing merit—that is human righteousness. But in the gospel of the water and the Spirit the righteousness of God has been revealed. It means that in removing our sins, human righteousness is not needed at all, and only the love and salvation by which God delivered us from sin and delivered us from judgment, only that plaque of God's merit, stands. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, only God's plaque of merit stands.

Do people really know and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit? People ordinarily say, "Believe in Jesus. If you believe in Jesus, you will be saved. You will become rich," but do they actually know the gospel of the water and the Spirit? The thing most talked about on this earth and yet least known is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The best-selling book in the whole world is the Bible, but those who know its contents the least are all the people of the earth. The most precious thing, the most gracious thing is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, yet it is what people know the least. So we are going to look at this part: how the Lord removed our sins and what the righteousness of God is. The righteousness of God revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is that God Himself saved us. It is that He removed our sins through the work He Himself did when He came to this earth. That is the righteousness of God. It says that in the gospel of the water and the Spirit the righteousness of God is revealed, leading from faith to faith, and this gospel of the water and the Spirit is exactly like coming upon an oasis in the desert. That God came to this earth and said to human beings, who commit so many sins, "I have removed all your sins like this. You have no sin"—this is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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The coverings of fig leaves sewn together and worn

Then what is the righteousness of God? Let us look at the word of Genesis. *"Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21)*. That He made them means that He sewed the clothes, that He made them. It means that He made tunics of skin, made them and clothed them. This is the righteousness of God.

People fell for the devil's enticement and committed sin. The very first thing Adam and Eve did after committing sin was to sew fig leaves together and make themselves coverings. Sewing fig leaves together to make coverings, and God's making tunics of skin and clothing them—these are human righteousness and the righteousness of God. It says, *"They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings" (Genesis 3:7)*. They sewed them together. To sew them together means to join the leaves one by one and string them in a line.

They sewed them together. They sewed fig leaves together, made coverings, and put them on. Sewing fig leaves together to make coverings and wearing them after committing sin is human righteousness. What does sewing fig leaves into coverings and wearing them mean? It means that people sew human righteousness together and try to cover their sins before God. It means that I take all of it—the merit I have established for God and for the kingdom of God, my offerings, my efforts, my service, my praying for others—and string it all together, as one strings dried fish, and make myself a covering to wear, in order to cover before God the sins that are in my heart. This is human righteousness.

Even if one makes coverings of fig leaves and wears them, sewing them all together as one sews leaves, covering below and covering above, can one cover the sins in one's heart? Can what

is covered stay covered forever? Or does it stay covered only for a month and then drop off? Does it stay covered only for three days and then drop off? It all ends up falling off. Plant matter does not last long. The moment it is cut from the ground, it is already finished. Just as with sewing fig leaves together to make coverings and wearing them, one can never receive the remission of the sins committed before God in one's heart by piling up the merit or virtue of human deeds and claiming to serve God well. We are those who have life, and if we commit sin in our hearts, then since it says that *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, we must without fail pay the price of blood, the price of life, before we can receive the remission of sins. Therefore, what we must rely on is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only the sins that we cannot cover with our deeds but all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and then rose again from death.

But since it did not work even when Adam and Eve made coverings of fig leaves and wore them, God called to Adam, *"Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)*, and Adam said, *"I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10)*. This word fits exactly. Even now, people who have sin in their hearts try to stay well hidden among the crowds of people. In the Bible, trees refer to people, and so they hide among the crowds of people. They do not go where only a few people gather, for fear that their sins might be exposed. In a church where many people come and go, a church swarming with people, they like to sit right in the middle—not at the back, and not at the front. Why is that? It is to hide themselves. People have that kind of psychology. If they come to the front, they feel they might be

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asked questions; if they go too far back, they feel people will think it strange; and if they stay hidden in the middle, people take it for granted that they believe and acknowledge that they attend church. If they are wedged in among people who believe in Jesus but believe halfheartedly, people who try to go to the kingdom of heaven by piling up their own virtue, and people who do not believe the truth, they are protected. But where does a sinner go if he is protected like that? He goes to hell. A sinner must be exposed and must turn himself in. Only then does he gain freedom.

The tunics of skin that God made and put on them

God questioned Adam and Eve, who were wearing coverings of fig leaves. Adam said, *"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12)*, and Eve said, *"The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:13)*. God said to the serpent, *"Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life" (Genesis 3:14)*. That is why the serpent now crawls on the ground.

God says that sin committed is sin committed. For the one who caused the sin to be committed and for the one who was enticed and committed the sin, it is the same sin. Even now, false angels of light deceive people, claiming to preach the gospel, and those who are led astray by them will enter hell together with the false prophets. But the Lord determined to make Adam and Eve, who had been enticed by the devil and had committed sin, His own people, His own children. Therefore He went to find them again, and since the wages of sin is death, He killed an

animal in the place of Adam and Eve and made it shed its blood, and He skinned that animal and made clothes of its skin and clothed them. It means that He made the clothes, made them and put them on them. While God made the tunics of skin for them, He tore off the clothes of fig leaves. Clothes of fig leaves do not last even a day but fall off, so that one has to mend them and put them on again every day, but once one wears tunics of skin, it is all right even to go into a thorny field. God's clothing them with tunics of skin means precisely that He clothed them with life. It means that He clothed them in order to make Adam and Eve live by His own flesh, by life.

This is the very first righteousness of God that was revealed. Human righteousness is the clothes of fig leaves, and the righteousness of God is the tunics of skin. Our Lord came to this earth and, in order to remove our sins, gave His flesh through the baptism He received from John, gave His blood on the Cross, and received the judgment Himself; He bore our sins with His own body, accomplished the remission of our sins Himself, and gave that merit to us. He made it so that we receive the remission of sins by faith. This is the righteousness of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is good news. This salvation, in which Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, was completed by His rising again from death. The righteousness we have put on is precisely this righteousness that Jesus Himself accomplished.

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Christ, who became the end of the law

Let us look at the word of the Book of Romans. *"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:1–4).* The people of Israel, being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own righteousness, strove to keep the law. The law was given to make us human beings realize and know our sins.

But that God made people receive the remission of sins by faith through the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle was the righteousness of God revealed in the Old Testament, and it was the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the New Testament, that sacrificial offering was none other than our Savior Jesus, who is God in His very being. Even though Jesus came to this earth and bore all the iniquities of the people of Israel and ended the judgment, even though He bore all sins by receiving baptism from John, they did not believe.

So it says, *"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4).* To make us without sin, our Lord bore all the sins of all mankind on this earth by giving up His flesh, that is, His body, at the Jordan River, received the judgment by taking the curse of the law, and became the end of the law for us. He completely saved us from judgment, from the curse of the law.

This is the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is that He saved us from sin. The righteousness of God is that He bore all our sins with His own body, with His flesh, with His

physical body, and made us to be without sin. It is also that He received the judgment on the Cross in our place. That is why Christ became the end of the law. While we stand under the law, judgment comes upon us. The law points out sin and testifies of the punishment for that sin, namely, that the wages of sin is death and hell. So our Lord brought that curse of the law entirely to an end. He brought it to completion. Look at the way in which Jesus ended the curse of the law. Because He bore all the sins of the world, including our sins, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, Jesus received that judgment in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, and so accomplished salvation.

He became the end of the law in order to accomplish righteousness, yet the Jews did not believe in Jesus. It means that they did not believe in what Jesus did for them when He came to this earth. That is precisely what establishing human righteousness is. Not accepting how our Lord, who came to save us, bore our sins and what He did in order to make our sins disappear—that is establishing human righteousness. It is by believing in that righteousness of the Lord that one becomes righteous.

The wise virgins who prepared oil

Let us look at the word of Matthew. "*Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold,*

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the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you'" (Matthew 25:1–12).

It says that the kingdom of heaven is like ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom. Who entered the kingdom of heaven? Of the ten, five were foolish and five were wise, and the foolish took their lamps but took no oil. The lamp refers to the church. Now, it says that they took no oil, and in the Bible oil refers to the Holy Spirit, to God. In Leviticus, when the sin offering and the peace offering were offered, hands were always laid on the sacrificial offering to pass the sins on to it, the blood was put on the horns of the altar, and the fat inside the animal was gathered entirely in one place and burned on the altar of burnt offering. It says that by doing so, God accepted it and they received the remission of sins.

The foolish took their lamps but took no oil. They attend church faithfully. They all say that the church they attend is orthodox. They say that the forefathers of faith of their church are Abraham and the apostle Paul, and that their church is a church built on the foundation laid by the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, the apostles. They say they believe according to the word of the apostles, and that just as there was not a single sin in the hearts of the apostles, they, too, believe in the same way.

The wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. The vessel is a person, the vessel that holds God. The five foolish virgins and the five wise virgins were waiting for the bridegroom together, holding their lamps. Being foolish means having a lamp but no oil, and if there is no oil, can the wick burn for long? The wick burns for only a day and then goes out. But even if the wick of the heart is somewhat lacking, if there is faith that fully believes in what the Lord has done, it does not go out. What is the work of the Lord that we fully believe in? It is the work in which Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross because of those sins, and rose again from death, giving us the remission of sins. We must receive this gospel of the water and the Spirit into our hearts.

In the parable of the ten virgins told by Jesus, the bridegroom arrives at midnight. The virgins who were waiting to meet him needed to have their lamps ready, but the foolish virgins had failed to prepare oil. In form everyone is the same, saying, "Lord, I believe in You," but the question is whether there is actually not a single sin in the heart and the Holy Spirit is present. While the bridegroom was delayed and they all slumbered and slept, at midnight there was a cry: *"Behold, the bridegroom is coming" (Matthew 25:6)*. The foolish say, *"Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out" (Matthew 25:8)*. They should have had their oil prepared before the bridegroom came, but they had failed to do so. If there is no oil inside, the thick wick of an oil lamp is bright for a moment but soon burns down and dies. These are people who claim to believe in Jesus well even though they have no oil inside and no Holy Spirit. They cry out loudly to receive the Holy Spirit like fire, but if one believes in the Lord and still has sin in one's heart, one is a foolish virgin.

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The bridegroom is the holy Son of God, God who is without sin. Then how can one try to receive God while still having sin? How can one think of receiving Him like that? The bridegroom came to this earth and cleansed those who would become His bride of their sins and adorned them. He made all the preparations for them to be His bride. He covered all our shortcomings, sent perfume and cosmetics so that we could be fully made up, and, coming to this earth, gave us His body, His flesh, at the Jordan River so that we could receive the remission of sins.

At the Jordan River He bore all our sins. On the Cross He received all the judgment. But the foolish thought they could buy oil with money. They went to buy it, thinking it would be enough if they gave many offerings, did much service, and attended an orthodox church. While they went to buy, the bridegroom came. Those who were ready went in to the wedding, and the door was shut. The Lord never receives a person who has not prepared oil. It says, *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)*. When one receives the remission of sins, sin actually disappears from one's heart and the Holy Spirit comes.

"Rise, take up your bed and walk"

Let us look at the word of John. Many sick people were lying by the pool of Bethesda. *"Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up*

the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' The sick man answered Him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked" (John 5:2–9).

Because there was a legend that whoever stepped into this pool first would be healed, all sorts of sick people and people with infirm bodies gathered there. Each one was full of his own righteousness, thinking he could at least do something by his own strength. But the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years had been lying on his bed for thirty-eight years, so it was impossible by human strength. When the Lord asked, *"Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6)*, he said, *"Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me" (John 5:7)*. By human methods, he was out.

At that time Jesus preached this good news, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. *"Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8)*. To the person who has given up, saying, "No matter how much I repent and live a life of faith, I am a sinner who can never become righteous," the Lord comes and, with a single word, "I bore all your sins at the Jordan River. You have no sin," performs the miracle of bringing him from death back to life. There were people who, when someone said he had received the remission of sins, picked a quarrel over his having taken up his bed and risen on the Sabbath, but if one has met Jesus, one must rise. One must not just lie every day on the bed where one lay

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for thirty-eight years and merely say that one believes. The basis for believing in the remission of sins and rising also lies in what Jesus did. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lifetime, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and He rose again from death and made us live.

The faith that eats His flesh and drinks His blood

Let us look at the word of John. *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever'" (John 6:51–58).*

Jesus said that He Himself is the bread of life. He said, *"The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51)*. The Jews quarreled, saying, *"How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" (John 6:52)*. How could a man eat the flesh of a man? When Jesus performed the miracle

of the five loaves and two fish in the wilderness and made bread for the body, as many as five thousand ate and followed Him in crowds. They needed bread for the body. But Jesus said that if one eats His flesh and drinks His blood, the bread that came down from heaven, one obtains eternal life.

How do we eat the flesh of Jesus? We eat it by faith. Let us look at the word of Matthew. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:13–17).*

John the Baptist was the representative of mankind. He was the last prophet, who cried out to people to repent and believe in Jesus and receive the remission of sins. The word baptism is baptizo (βαπτίζω) in Greek, and it means to be washed, to be buried, to be transferred, to be immersed. When Jesus received baptism from John, the sins of our hearts, all the sins of the world, passed on to Him, and so our hearts are washed. The heart that believes that He bore sin with His own body at the Jordan River—that is the faith that eats the flesh of Jesus. The Jordan River is the river of death. In the most fitting way to fulfill all righteousness, Jesus received the laying on of hands from John and had all the sins of the world passed on to Him and bore them.

It says, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life" (John 6:54)*. The blood of Jesus is true drink. When we believe in that blood He shed when He died on the Cross, our

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hearts are refreshed. It is because the Lord Himself received all the judgment we were to receive. It is refreshing. Some people say that one can be saved by drinking only the blood of Jesus, but that is absolutely not so. One who only drinks the blood dies of hunger.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53). The Lord did not come to this earth and only die on the Cross. At the Jordan River He bore all the sins of the world with His flesh. Even if one believes in the Lord, if one believes only in the Cross, it is wasted effort. Whenever the apostle Paul spoke of the sprinkling of blood, he always spoke of baptism, that is, the flesh of Jesus Christ.

We eat by faith the baptism at the Jordan River, by which Jesus bore all sins. Because the Lord bore all my sins, I have no sin. Only a person without sin can call on the Lord and pray with a clean heart. *"In it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17)*. Do you believe in what the Lord, who saved us with the flesh and blood of God, did? I believe. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we accept by faith, this work of salvation is contained together. Because Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and He rose again from death.

Do not be cowed before people while believing in Jesus. It says, *"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27)*. By believing that all our sins were borne with the flesh of Jesus, we are united with Him and put Him on.

The baptism that became the sign that saves us

Let us look at the word of 1 John. *"Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV). If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life" (1 John 5:1–12).*

Christ means 'anointed.' Jesus, as our Prophet, our King, and the High Priest of heaven, bore our sins with His blood, with His flesh, and gave us life. It is only by hearing and believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit that one receives the remission of sins. It means that Jesus, the Word who became flesh and came, bore all our sins when He received baptism from John at the Jordan River, and that the judgment came to an end when He

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shed His blood on the Cross. The apostle Paul, Peter, and all the apostles speak of the flesh and blood of Jesus, of the baptism of Jesus and the Cross.

Let us read the word of 1 Peter. *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).* Jesus' receiving baptism from John in the water is the sign that saves us. His shedding blood on the Cross is the evidence that we have been exempted from judgment. By eating His flesh we have received the remission of sins. It is not that we do not commit sin in the flesh, but that our conscience has been changed by faith into a good conscience, and so we can call God our Lord and our Father.

Do not boast of being orthodox. When we open the word and talk about the gospel of the water and the Spirit, many people cannot understand it. The food of the spirit is the Lord's flesh. Is baptism indeed the sign that has saved us? *"Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23).* The word is the measuring rod. It never changes. God's servant John the Baptist cried out, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).* By believing in this word, we are born again.

It says, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).* In the gospel of the water and the Spirit the righteousness of God is revealed, and whoever believes becomes righteous. *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).* We have become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Do you have sin? No, there is none. Is there sin in your conscience? No, there is none. All human beings on this earth can receive the remission of sins.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By the merit of God, who gave His flesh and blood and removed all our sins, we have received the remission of sins by faith. We praise our Lord. What we, who have heard the word and become righteous, praise is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only our sins but all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and after paying the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, He rose again from death and gave us eternal life. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Acknowledge the Creator and receive the truth of salvation

< Romans 1:18–25 >

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

Examine the heart that suppresses the truth

Have you ever said that you know God, and yet in your heart actually relied more on something else? When visible riches or

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the recognition of people look dependable, we easily put the word of God aside in order to hold on to them. Even so, we may think that our faith is better than that of those who do not know God, but Paul is asking not how much we speak of God, but whether we accept His truth. This is because saying that one knows God does not in itself mean believing in what God has done.

Paul says, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18)*. To be ungodly is not to keep God in one's heart and not to fear Him, and the unrighteousness the Bible speaks of is, before being any wrong act, not believing in what God has done. What God has done is that He sent His Son Jesus to this earth, and that Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in the place of sinners, and rose again from death and saved them. Therefore, the one who suppresses the truth is the one who, while having his own sins, does not accept the salvation given in this way, and who even stands in the way of others believing in that salvation. God says that He has completely removed the sin of the world, yet such a person puts his own thoughts first and says that it cannot be so. If one places one's own judgment above the word of God, one ends up closing one's heart even before the truth that was given so that one might be saved.

There are also people who say they believe in Jesus and yet think that only the sins they have already committed have been remitted, and that the sins they will commit in the future must be dealt with again each time. But the sin of the world that Jesus bore through the baptism He received from John included even the sins we will commit in the future, and the blood He shed on

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the Cross was the price of all that sin. If we divide the salvation the Lord accomplished into sins already committed and sins yet to be committed, we cannot accept the righteousness of God, which has removed our lifelong sins. So the word about suppressing the truth in unrighteousness applies not only to people outside the church, but also to those who say they believe in Jesus and yet refuse this complete remission of sins. We must examine whether we have a heart that wants to acknowledge the Lord's salvation only as far as it fits our own thinking.

The power of the Creator that all things reveal

Having spoken of the wrath of God, Paul goes on immediately to explain what God has shown to man. God is not One who hides Himself so that man cannot know Him at all and then rebukes him for not having believed. Because God has shown within man what may be known of God, and has also revealed His power and divine nature through all the things He made, man cannot simply say that he does not know the Creator.

The word says, *"His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20)*. The things before our eyes did not come into being by themselves; God made them out of nothing. Therefore, as we look at all things, we must not stop at merely enjoying their beauty and benefit, but must acknowledge God, who gave them. Since the conscience God placed within man also makes him look back on whether his actions are right or wrong, sin does not disappear just because others do not know of it.

That said, one's sins do not vanish merely by knowing the fact that the Creator exists. Knowing God through all things is

only the beginning, so if one has come to acknowledge God by looking at all things, one must now listen to the word about how that God has saved sinners. This is because the One who gave us life also has the authority to speak on the problem of our sins. That word conveys that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who made heaven and earth, came clothed in the body of a created human being. And it conveys that He had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and that by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross He received in our place the judgment we were to receive. If one claims to seek God and yet pushes away the very word of salvation by one's own judgment, one is in effect acknowledging only the existence of the One who made us, while not receiving His love.

The idols that came in where thanksgiving had disappeared

Paul makes clear how people, though they knew God, grew distant from Him. The word says, *"Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Romans 1:21)*. If one regards the life and all things received from God as one's own, then in place of a thankful heart, the thought of satisfying one's own cravings grows. Such a person lives without being conscious of God and yet thinks himself wise, but in fact he is entering a darkness in which he does not recognize the One who gave him life.

Paul says that they *"changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (Romans 1:23)*. Since they gave the place of the Creator to created things, the worship

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that should be given to God came to be directed elsewhere. This is not limited to setting up an image before one's eyes and bowing down to it. A heart that believes as if riches would guarantee life, or that receives the words of people as more authoritative than the word of God, is also heading in the same direction. This is because every instance of loving and serving created things more than God is idolatry.

Loving people and using the material things we need is not in itself serving idols. The problem lies in relying on them more than on God and thereby rejecting the truth of God. If one does not believe in the Lord's complete remission of sins for fear of losing people's recognition, or pushes away the will of God in order to gain riches, it reveals who the master of one's heart is. No matter how precious a created thing may be, it cannot bear our sins in our place and deliver us from judgment. The only One who can deliver us from judgment is Jesus alone, who had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid its price by shedding His blood on the Cross, and then rose again from death. Yet people hold on to what cannot save them and turn away from the word of the Savior.

The same problem is found in one's own wisdom that judges the word of God. This is because, although one's own thinking cannot remove sin, one tries to decide by the standard of that thinking whether salvation is true. Before the power of the Creator, we must know our own limits as created beings, and before the love that has saved sinners, we must believe just as it is what the Lord accomplished through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Giving thanks to God is not merely expressing thanks for the material things we have received; it must extend to truly receiving the grace that has delivered us from sin.

Do not regard God's giving people up as peace

The word that God gave people up in the lusts of their hearts does not mean that He granted that it is all right to live according to one's cravings. Because, as mentioned earlier, they had forsaken the Creator and chosen idols in their hearts, God left them to the desire of that heart, and the result that followed was that, following that heart, they dishonored their bodies among themselves. We must not think that, just because nothing happens right away, even God's judgment has disappeared. This is because the wrath Paul speaks of does not end with merely suffering some hardship for a while on earth; it is the eternal judgment that a sinner who has rejected the truth of salvation will receive in both spirit and body. Paul is speaking here about people who have not been born again, that is, those who have not yet received the remission of sins and who suppress the truth. The weakness of the flesh remains even in those who have been born again, but since they have a heart that believes in God, they are fundamentally different from these people.

Paul points out that they *"exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Romans 1:25)*. What God has done remains as it is, but people regarded it as a lie and served created things more. Therefore, the way out of this, too, does not end with suppressing one's cravings a little. One must accept as true the salvation of God that one had regarded as false, and turn one's heart to the Lord, who has removed sin.

Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so remitted our sins. The sin of the world that the Lord bore includes all the sins we

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commit from the time we are born until we die. Therefore, a sinner does not complete salvation by adding his own merit; he receives the remission of sins by believing in his heart in the salvation the Lord has already accomplished. Do not limit, by your own thinking, the Savior who bore all those sins even though He knew our shortcomings.

At the beginning, we asked whether we have relied more on something else while saying that we know God. Riches and people cannot remove our sins, but the Lord, who made us, bore those sins Himself and even received the judgment on the Cross for us. Now, I hope that you will turn around the heart that has turned away from the Creator while clinging to corruptible things, believe in Jesus Christ, who has saved us, and give thanks and praise to God. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Will you defend sin or believe in the Savior?

< Romans 1:26–32 >

“For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”

When craving changes the order of God

There are times when we hear people laugh off a wrong that was done, saying that everyone lives that way. Sometimes we

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feel relieved because many people do the same thing, and sometimes, while defending the faults of others, we come to want to hide our own wrongs as well. But if people tell one another that it is all right, does that make the matter right before God as well? Today's word exposes not only the heart that commits sin but also the heart that calls sin right, and it teaches us where we must turn around.

After speaking of how people served created things more than the Creator, Paul says, *"For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature" (Romans 1:26)*. The words "for this reason" are connected to the idolatry that comes before. The heart that pushed God away and put its own cravings first abandoned the order of God even in the use of the body. The problem begins from regarding what I want as more right than what God has ordained.

In the word that follows, it is written that the men also abandoned the natural use of women, harbored lust toward one another, and men committed shameful things with men. It is pointing out that they changed, according to their own cravings, the order God gave when He made man and woman. If sin is left as it is, its intensity grows greater and greater until it reaches the point of changing even the order God has ordained, and Paul says that they received the penalty due for their error, making clear that God's judgment is upon such conduct. Rather than using this word to mock others, we must see how wrong the heart is that tries to change what God has ordained according to our own cravings.

If we direct the rebuke of this passage only at certain people, then the covetousness, envy, and pride that follow end up having nothing to do with us. But Paul, by continuing to list many sins, is exposing the heart and life of the person who has departed

from God. Rather than looking at sins we do not have and considering ourselves all right, we must also lay the sins that are within us before the same word of God. This is because words pointing out the sins of others cannot cover my sins. The One who did not merely keep my sins covered but actually removed them is Jesus. Jesus, by receiving baptism from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Therefore, the place where we are to acknowledge our own sins is not among people who defend one another, but before this Savior, who has already removed those sins.

The result of a heart that did not want to retain God

The word says, *"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting" (Romans 1:28)*. Not wanting to retain God means not feeling that God is necessary, and a debased mind is a mind that has lost the right heart that fears God. Because they did not want to retain God in their hearts, the will of God was pushed out of the standard of judgment, and in the end their own cravings came to decide what is fitting.

In the statement that God gave them up, too, we must see the fact that it was people who first did not want to retain God. The heart that has rejected God regards living according to its own will as freedom, but what comes out of that heart is things that are not fitting. That God does not stop them right away does not mean that He delights in that way. God leaves those who do not want to retain Him in their hearts to their own desire and judges

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them in both spirit and body on the day of judgment, and that is the law of the righteousness of God. Therefore, the wrongness of the heart cannot be covered over by the fact that one has gotten along without any trouble. Because the righteousness of God does not simply leave sin covered over, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross. Those who do not want to retain God in their hearts are pushing away even this Savior, who was judged in their place.

A person who has not received the remission of sins easily thinks that it is all right to live trusting his own heart. But if, every time a craving comes out of his heart, he accepts that craving as right, he also loses the way to discern sin. This is because even what he felt at first to be wrong, as he keeps doing it and defending it, he comes to regard as if it were all right. Therefore, rather than the fact that our own hearts want something, we must first listen to what God has said.

The list of sins found in ourselves as well

Paul says, *"Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers" (Romans 1:29)*. There is the unrighteousness of not believing in God, and there are the heart that pursues what is filthy and the covetousness that seeks endlessly to gain. Envy, which dislikes others doing well, produces strife, and the heart that seeks its own gain goes as far as deceiving others. The unseen sins of the heart are revealed in words and actions.

Whispering and backbiting are also included among them. Those who say such things think that they have not directly harmed anyone, but words that belittle others behind their backs and gather people to one's own side wound that person and stir up strife. Pride and boasting, likewise, exalt one's own thinking and make one not listen to the words of God and of other people. When we read this list, we must not call to mind only a few great crimes, but must look back even on the words and thoughts we have usually taken for granted.

The word also says, *"Undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful" (Romans 1:31)*. To be untrustworthy is to betray a promise, and to be unloving and unmerciful is the heart that does not look after those one ought to care for. If one breaks a promise for one's own gain and closes one's heart to the troubles of others, that sin is exposed before God even if one looks respectable on the outside. We must also see how we have been strict in the face of others' faults while being lenient toward our own circumstances.

A person cannot escape from the root of such sins by correcting a few of his actions. This is because we were sinners from birth, and as we have lived, we have revealed that sin in heart and in deed. Therefore, if we read this word and end only with a resolution to live better, we do not reach the remission of sins. We must acknowledge our sins before God and know Jesus, who bore those sins that we cannot resolve by ourselves. When Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, He did not leave out a single one of the sins written in this list, and He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood to pay its price, and rose again from death. Therefore, whenever covetousness, envy, and backbiting are revealed within us, it is not that we must wash away sin anew; rather, we must believe that those sins, too, are

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sins for which the Lord has already received the judgment in our place.

Confess the Savior with the mouth that used to defend sin

The last part of this passage is *"who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them" (Romans 1:32)*. It speaks not merely of doing such things without knowing the consequence of sin, but of doing them while knowing God's judgment, and even calling the same conduct of others right. It may seem that, having approved one another's sins, they can feel at ease together, but such words cannot do away with what God has ordained. And yet, when such people see a righteous person who has received the remission of sins, they whisper and backbite instead, so they call sin right and oppose righteousness.

A heart that calls sin right makes one regard even the Lord's salvation as unnecessary. If one says that sin is not sin because one does not want to admit one's wrong, one cannot accept why Jesus received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross for sinners. On the other hand, knowing one's own sins does not mean one has already been saved, so from the place of having acknowledged sin, one must listen to the work of the Savior to the end. Instead of hiding sin to avoid condemnation, one must believe how the Lord has removed that sin.

Two thousand years ago, at the Jordan River, Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John. Because He had the sin of the world passed on to Him in this way, He shed

His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in our place, and He rose again from death and gave us the complete remission of sins. The sins we committed yesterday, the sins of the heart we have not yet shown outwardly, and even the sins we will commit for the rest of our lives are included in that salvation. The righteousness obtained by believing in the Lord with the heart is not a righteousness obtained by insisting that there is no sin; it is the righteousness of God, who actually removed that sin.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, the weakness of the flesh remains, but there is no need to use it as an excuse to defend our wrongs. This is because, with the faith that the Lord bore even that sin and paid its price on the Cross, we can acknowledge our wrongs and turn around. People telling one another that it is all right does not make the matter right before God, and those who call sin right remain as they are under the wrath of God. So we must have pity on those who are still in that place and preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to them, and we must lay down the heart that tried to hide sin by winning the agreement of others, confess Jesus, who has remitted our sins, as our Savior, and follow His word. ✉

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CHAPTER

2

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Who can escape the judgment of God?

< Romans 2:1–16 >

"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God,

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but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

Even if one judges others, one's own sin remains

Romans chapter 1 ends with a long record of the sins of people who knew God and yet did not serve Him. As I read down that list, the face that comes to mind is usually not my own but someone else's. But chapter 2 begins with the word "therefore" and turns toward the person who was nodding along at that list. It asks whether that person who judges others can escape the judgment of God, since he is practicing the same things. Since the way for us to live does not lie in holding on to the position of being more right than others, I must hear this question as a word spoken to me.

Let us read verse 1. *"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (Romans 2:1)*. This means that the law one puts forward when judging another person also applies to the one who judges. If a person knows that stealing is wrong and yet acts according to his own greed, and says that hating is sin and yet harbors hatred in his heart, he himself cannot escape the judgment he has passed. Sin remains as it is in the heart of the person who judges others because he does not know the righteousness of God and

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has not yet received the remission of sins, so he must not make the fact that he has accurately pointed out another's fault into his own righteousness.

Verse 2 makes clear that the judgment of God is according to truth, and verse 3 asks whether the person who does the same things will escape that judgment. People make excuses by citing circumstances in their favor, but God sees sin as sin, and He does not say that the sin that remains is gone because of the name of being a believer in God. The reason that judgment is according to truth is that, although the way of salvation is open to everyone, people are judged because they do not accept it. A person is judged not because he has more sins than others, but because he does not believe in the salvation that has removed all sins. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him—the sin of the world in which the sins of the one who judges and the sins of the one who is judged are all included without exception—and He shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and rose again from death. If a person says he believes in Jesus and yet does not know this gospel of the water and the Spirit, so that sin remains in his heart, he must hear this rebuke. Since the confidence that we can judge others cannot save us, we must first acknowledge the problem of our own sins before God.

The goodness of God makes us turn around

God's exposing our sins is not a matter of telling us to prepare better excuses. It is to lead us to realize that we cannot become righteous by our own strength and to receive the salvation God has given. That is why, after the question of

whether one can escape the judgment, the word goes on to speak of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering.

Let us read verse 4. *"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4)*. God had pity on us, who were to be judged for our sins, and He did not wait until we kept the law and became clean by ourselves before saving us. Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth and solved the problem of our sins. It was when He received baptism from John that Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and it was when He shed His blood on the Cross that He received the judgment for those sins in our place. And Jesus rose again from death. This is the goodness of God, and the sins we commit throughout our whole lifetime with our hearts and our deeds are also included in that sin of the world. Therefore, forbearance means that He accepted in advance even the shortcomings of ours that would be revealed after we believed, and this salvation is not an incomplete salvation that demands that we deal with the remaining sins by ourselves.

But if a person looks only at his own shortcomings, rejects the word that the Lord has remitted all sins, and confesses until he dies that he is a sinner, that is not humility but despising the riches of the salvation that has been given. If one thinks that sins are removed in proportion to how many times one repeats prayers of repenting of one's wrongs, one makes the work the Lord accomplished dependent on one's own deeds. True repentance is to acknowledge one's own sins that God exposes and, together with that, to accept the word that Jesus has remitted all those sins. There is no reason to agree with the rebuke about sin and yet be stubborn against the word of salvation.

The wrath in verse 5 is connected to the heart that rejects the goodness of God. Just because God is longsuffering does not

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mean that the judgment has disappeared, so we must not take the time we spend while refusing the word of salvation as evidence of our own safety. Turn around from the thought that you must add your own deeds in order to become righteous, and believe in the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished. Instead of holding on to one's stubbornness, answering "Yes" to the word that my sins have been solved through the baptism the Lord received from John and His shedding of blood on the Cross is true repentance and true faith.

Seek eternal life and follow the truth

Speaking of how God renders to each one, Paul shows two different ways. Let us read verses 6 and 7. *"Who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality" (Romans 2:6–7)*. We must not separate this word from the goodness spoken of before and read it as meaning that if one piles up many good deeds, one obtains eternal life as the reward for them. For the person who believes in the righteousness of God, who has remitted sins, follows that righteousness while looking to the eternal life the Lord will give, but the person who holds on to his own righteousness goes against the truth of salvation.

The person who does good by patient continuance is the person who believes in what God has accomplished and follows that word even when there is opposition from people. What God has accomplished is this: through the baptism Jesus received from John, He had the sin of the world, which includes even that person's sins, passed on to Him, and He shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price for it. Glory, honor, and immortality are

different from the craving to receive a better evaluation than others on this earth. To seek them is to hope for the eternal life God gives to His children, and because the hope of living together with the Lord, who rose again from death, is certain, one walks the way of faith even in the midst of hardships. Perseverance does not become the price that washes away sins; rather, because one relies on God, who has given salvation, one lives with perseverance.

Verse 8, in contrast, speaks of those who are self-seeking and do not follow the truth but follow unrighteousness. Even if many people together insist that something is right, a thought that goes against the word of God does not become the truth because of their number. Since the One who gives salvation is Jesus Christ, we must not make people's approval and the power of a crowd the basis of our faith. We must not push away the gospel of the water and the Spirit in order to defend the claims of our own side, but must believe what God has done just as the word says.

Verses 9 and 10 again make clear the end of these two ways as tribulation and anguish, and as glory, honor, and peace. The same judgment applies to the Jew and to the Greek alike because, as verse 11 says, there is no partiality with God. The record of having received the law first cannot take the place of salvation, and the circumstance of being a Gentile cannot push a believer out of grace. For God looks not at outward appearance but at whether one believes the word with one's heart. No one can escape the judgment by his own righteousness. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him without distinction between Jew and Greek, and He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, so everyone must believe in this righteousness of the Savior revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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The law and the conscience make one seek the Savior

Then is a person who has not received the law also free of responsibility for sin? Verses 12 through 15 block the thought of placing oneself outside the judgment on the basis of whether or not one has the law. Verse 12 makes clear that both those who have the law and those who do not are judged because of the fact that they have sinned. Neither the claim that one is safe because one has received the law nor the claim that one has no sin because one did not know the law can stand before the judgment of God.

Let us read verse 13. *"For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified" (Romans 2:13)*. This means that hearing and knowing cannot be regarded as the same as having done. To claim to be justified by the law, one must actually do its commands, but we are people who have already broken those commands. Since there is no one who will be justified by doing the law perfectly, this word blocks the way for the hearer of the law to boast that he is righteous by relying on his own knowledge, and it gathers even those who have the law all under sin. We need the Savior not because God's commands are wrong, but because we, who have broken those commands, cannot remove our sins by ourselves.

Verses 14 and 15 say that even Gentiles, who do not have the law, have the witness of conscience. The fact that there are times when they do what is right and times when they excuse what they have done wrong reveals that there is a law in their hearts that knows right from wrong. Conscience points out sin, but it cannot wash that sin away, and the judgment of God does not change just because one has excused oneself in one's own thinking. We who feel the pangs of conscience must not try to

hide that torment or cover it over with upright conduct, but must come to Jesus, who has remitted our sins.

Finally, let us read verse 16. *"In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel" (Romans 2:16)*. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Paul preached is not news that hides the judgment. Before God, who judges even what is secret, it is news that makes clear how necessary this salvation is: Jesus Christ, through the baptism He received from John, had even our secret sins passed on to Him, and He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place. Because the Lord has already borne even the sins that have not been revealed to people, we can believe in the Lord's righteousness instead of hiding those sins.

To us, who were thinking of other people when faced with the list of sins in chapter 1, Paul said that we have no excuse. Neither words of judgment, nor the record of having heard the law, nor the excuses of conscience can remit our sins. Now receive the judgment that was directed at others as the word by which you realize your own sins, and accept in your heart the salvation accomplished by Jesus, who received baptism from John and was hung on the Cross. What we, who have no excuse, need is not a better excuse but the grace of the Savior, who received the judgment for all sins in our place, and the only person who can escape the judgment of God is the one who believes in this grace. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The remission of sins accomplished by the word alone

< Romans 2:1–5 >

“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,”

People who know God and yet do not serve Him

We all know the fact that, whether we commit sins or not before God, we were born into this world as human beings who have sin. Now, when God made man, He put what may be known of God into the heart of man. There is no one who does not know God. It is said that even a tribe living in the most remote place knows that God exists and has a religion. By

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looking at all things, one can know that God is majestic and almighty.

Yet people, though they know that God exists, do not serve God. They neither glorify God nor give thanks to God; rather, they became futile in their thoughts and changed the glory that should be given to God into idols in the image of corruptible man, of beasts, and of creeping things. They changed it into loving the world, the things created in the world, more than God. This is what Romans chapter 1 speaks of from verse 18 on. Romans chapter 2 begins with the word "therefore" because it continues speaking from this preceding account.

People do know God, but because their hearts are rotten with sin, they cannot hold the love and light of God. Out of a rotten heart, they like the things that give off the stench of decay. To put it simply, a person who has not received the remission of sins loves the corruptible things of this world, the things that will pass away, only the things visible to the eyes of the flesh—that is, things like people, money, and material possessions—more than God. The things in this world are things God has made, and they reveal the handiwork of God. The things of this world show how beautiful God is and how holy God is.

Among the things God has made, a mother's love reveals the true love of God. That motherly love with which a mother loves her children also serves as evidence of how much God loves us human beings. It can be said that God's having put a conscience in the heart of man reveals the righteousness of God. How accurate the conscience in the heart is as a standard of judgment that says this is sin and this is evil! How many such beautiful things there are among the things God has made!

Nevertheless, even though people can know God by looking at nature, they cannot love God because they have not tasted the love of God. What I have said so far is about people who do not

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know God. Of these people the word says, *"Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened" (Romans 1:21)*. Exactly as this word says, they do not give to God the glory they ought to give, think of corruptible man and all things as more glorious than God, and love people more than God. So it is fitting that these people, loving sin more, are judged before God. What we, who are to be judged, need is the remission of sins accomplished by the love of God. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including of course our sins of opposing God, transferred to Him once and for all, and He received that judgment in our place by the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and opened the way of salvation.

God gave these people up. He gave them up to live according to the filthy cravings of their hearts, according to their lusts. Those who have been given up by God are truly wretched in this world. What became of people as a result of being abandoned by God is laid out from Romans 1:18 onward. I cannot tell you how well it portrays what man is like: full of all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, and maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, and evil-mindedness; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, inventors of evil things.

God gave people what may be known of God in their hearts. Yet these people did not incline their hearts toward God, did not even try to know God, and, though they knew God, loved the corruptible things of the world more than God. So the word says that God gave them over to their debased minds and left them as they were, to commit all kinds of sins and to be wounded in their own bodies and their own souls. There is nothing more pitiful than this. How great a wrath there will be for those who are hated by God and provoke the wrath of God! We must know how

much wrath human beings are treasuring up before God. If one is treasuring up the wrath of God, one will suffer the wrath of God.

Yet human beings, even while treasuring up the wrath of God, approve of other people doing the same. We come to see that human beings have become complete enemies of God. In God's sight they cannot possibly be loved, and the relationship between God and man has become one of complete enmity. They pick out and do the very things God hates, and people, seeing this, say it is right. People who do not know God say that acts of opposing God are right. This is exactly what Romans chapter 1 says. How evil man is! *"Backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful" (Romans 1:30–31).*

It can be said that human beings who have not received the remission of sins are worse than beasts. How unloving they are! Even we who have received the remission of sins have a cold side, but we are not that unloving. But those who have not received the remission of sins are exactly as shown in the Book of Romans. They are unmerciful and undiscerning; they oppose without even knowing; they are untrustworthy, disobedient to parents, and proud; and they invent evil things. Doing evil would be bad enough, but they even make plans to carry out evil. People who do not know God are violent and haters of God. This is precisely the fundamental state of man. If a person does not know God, there can be no such thing as love in his heart. People who do not know God are really good at backbiting. Instead of constructive words, they backbite, and they are unloving and unmerciful. The salvation that has resolved even the fundamental sin of such people is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus, through the baptism He received from

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John, had all the sins of the world, including the sins of people's hearts and deeds, passed on to Him once and for all, He shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins and rose again from death.

God has given what may be known of God through all things and also in the hearts of people. Yet people do not know Him. Even if they do know, they do not fear God and do not give glory to God. That is why Romans 2:1 says as follows. *"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (Romans 2:1).*

Those who have the law judge others

The apostle Paul says, *"O man, whoever you are who judge."* If a person receives the law of God and realizes his sins, knowing how evil he is before God and how beast-like a being he is, and yet does not truly accept the love and salvation of Jesus Christ and become born again—that is, if the Holy Spirit is not within him—what result follows? This result follows without fail. If one believes in God and believes in Jesus and yet does not have the Holy Spirit within, one becomes a person who judges others. Because we have the law, we can judge those who do not believe in God. Because we know God through the law, we can judge according to the law whether people do well or badly. As we read in the previous chapter, we can look at whisperers, backbiters, and inventors of evil things and judge that this is wrong or that is right.

The apostle Paul is now speaking about those who have the law. Earlier he spoke about those who do not have the law, and now, about those who have the law—those who know the law

but do not have Jesus Christ within them—he is saying: O man who judges others, whoever you are, you are inexcusable, for in judging another you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the same things.

There are very many people who believe in Jesus and yet have not received the remission of sins before God. They do believe in Jesus, but they believe blindly, and as for how far their believing in Jesus reaches, it reaches only as far as knowing the law. So they do know the law, but while they judge others with it, they themselves still practice the very things the law forbids. Since they judge others while doing the same themselves, with the very judgment by which they judge others they condemn themselves.

Here, the word "you" refers to oneself. What does it say one does to oneself? It says one judges oneself, condemns oneself. This is what people who have not received the Holy Spirit do. A person who believes in Jesus and yet has not been born again looks at the people of the world and says, "Why do they do this? Why do they do that? They should not do that," and yet does the very same things himself. In doing so, he judges himself. Why is that? It is because there is the law. Because there is the law, he judges others and also condemns himself. To such a person it is said, *"But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things" (Romans 2:2)*.

Even after believing in Jesus, they have sin in their hearts, and while knowing the word of God's commandments and knowing how to live before God, they pass judgment on the sins committed by those who do not know God. Who is it that judges others? It is those who had received the law at that time, those who claimed to believe in God. Before God, merely having received the law makes one not the least bit different from one who does not believe. If one has believed in Jesus, one must by

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all means be born again; if one has not been born again, there is no difference at all. That being born again takes place when one believes with one's heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus washed away our sins. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and bearing those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross, was judged and died in our place, and rose again from death, thereby remitting all our sins.

Those who believe in God, have received the law, know the law, and judge those who do not believe must listen to the word that says God will surely judge you. It means that knowing the law, knowing God, or keeping the law a little even though one cannot keep it all makes one no different from one who does not believe. Even if a person knows God, if the sins of his heart have not been washed away, God does not treat him differently from one who does not believe but judges him just the same. Among the many people who do not believe in God, there are very many who once tried believing in Jesus. We also know that the law is in the hearts of those people. Those people also know in their hearts that such things should not be done, and they even condemn themselves. Still, they strive to keep the law, even if only in small matters. On the other hand, if one believes in Jesus and yet has not truly been born again, one ends up living one's whole life committing worse sins than one who does not believe.

As for whom the apostle Paul is now aiming at, it is the Jews. There are Jews in Rome, and it is rather the Jews who are persecuting those who believe in Jesus. The Jews judge others with the law, and they judge themselves as well. The word of Romans 2:1–5 is that such things happen when those who have the law oppose Jesus Christ and oppose the righteous who rightly believe in Jesus Christ.

We must know the fact that a person who judges others on the grounds of knowing the law, while he himself practices the very things for which others are judged, such as sexual immorality and hatred, will be judged just the same before God. Whether one does not believe or believes in God, anyone who has not been born again before God will surely not escape the judgment. To escape the judgment, one must receive the remission of sins. Then let us think for a moment about this: why do those who have received the law fail to receive the remission of sins even while believing in Jesus, and why do they fail to become righteous?

Do not despise the abundant grace of God

The law was given to make people know their sins, so that they would repent and believe in the abundant love of God. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If one believes, one becomes righteous and comes to have no sin at all. Then why do those who have received the law receive the judgment of God? The apostle Paul is explaining the reason why those who have received the law fail to receive the remission of sins even while believing in Jesus. Let us look at verse 4. *"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" (Romans 2:4)*.

Despising the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering—despising that abundant grace of God—is the first reason. What happens if one despises the abundant grace of the remission of sins that God has given out of pity for human beings who cannot make it by the law? The word says that even if one knows God, has the law, and knows the statutes and the

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word of God, if one despises that abundant goodness and forbearance of God and His abundant love, one will not receive the remission of sins but will be judged.

As people who had the law, the people of Israel, the Jews, were like this, and today those who have the law are all Christian believers. They are those who have the word of God, those who believe the word of God. They believe the word of God, but the point is that if, while believing this word, they reject and despise that abundant love contained in the truth of God, they will perish. It is good for us to learn and know the word of God. But we must never despise that great love of God, that abundant grace. Look at the content of the grace we must accept rather than despise. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment in our place by the blood He shed on the Cross because of those sins, and rose again from death, thereby accomplishing the remission of sins.

We must keep in mind the fact that believing in Jesus, knowing the law of God, or living a little according to the law cannot make us escape the righteous judgment of God, the judgment that says *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. Why do so many people today who believe in Christianity stand before the judgment seat of God and go to hell? Why do they go wrong even though they believe in Jesus? God, who is rich in mercy, has saved us through Jesus Christ, but because they ignore and despise that love of God, they perish. The reason people are abandoned by God even while claiming to believe in God is that they despise that abundant love of God, who is rich in mercy.

God said, "I love you. I love you to the end, I have loved you forever, and I have loved you this completely. For your sake, I love you perfectly." Yet people despise that perfect love, that

abundant mercy. The word “abundant” is used of grain that has been reaped in autumn and piled up into a very large stack. When a single grain of rice seed is planted in a seedbed and grows to bear not a hundredfold or sixtyfold but several hundredfold, that is called abundant. We are born as lumps of sin and commit sins throughout our whole lives, but God has removed all sins far more amply than that, completely and perfectly, from the time He made the universe and all things until eternity. He has removed them very abundantly.

If one despises this, if one despises the love of God, one will perish. Why did the Jews despise Jesus Christ? Why do Christian believers despise those who say they have become righteous by believing in Jesus? If one is a sinner before believing in Jesus and still a sinner after believing, why would anyone believe in such a Jesus? Believing would make no difference. One might as well say it is better to set up any old object at home and believe in that. When we believe in Jesus Christ, if we believe in that abundant grace of God, who is rich in mercy, it is salvation, and if we despise it, it is hell. This is exactly what the apostle Paul is talking about.

People who perish because of their stubbornness

The second reason people are judged even while believing in God is their stubbornness. We must not change the heart we have once given before God. Even before people, we must not change the heart we have once given. But as for what went wrong, it is that when people first believed, they believed not in that abundant grace of God but in some doctrine, or in the shallow religious knowledge they had. Belonging to some denomination, they believed what that denomination said and received their

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teaching there. So they say, "How can one be righteous when one sins every day? One is a sinner."

Because people are stubborn in this way, it is said, *"But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5)*. Many people go to hell and perish because of these two things: despising the abundant grace of God and human stubbornness. I, too, used to think that only certain people were stubborn. But as I have lived, I have seen that there is no one without stubbornness, and that every person has a stubbornness second to none. I myself am extremely stubborn.

Once a person becomes stubborn about something—once he has believed in Jesus wrongly and, thinking that wrong belief is right, begins to be stubborn—even if he is told what is right according to God, he remains stubborn and will not let go. He is stubborn to the end. People argue over whether there are righteous people or not. In Romans chapter 3 there appears the word *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)*, and even though reading just a few more lines after it shows how people have become righteous, they fight until they die over whether there are no righteous people or there are. That is how stubborn people who believed in Jesus wrongly from the start are. When one is stubborn, one becomes arrogant and heedless of others. The grounds for abandoning the stubborn claim that there are no righteous people also lie in what Jesus has done. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world, including even all our faults, transferred to Him once and for all, and after paying the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, He rose again from death, so the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is righteous.

God says that there are righteous people. It is said, *"Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations" (Genesis 6:9)*, and Abel, too, was called righteous. Noah was righteous, Abraham was righteous, and it is said that all who believe in Jesus Christ as Abraham did are righteous. It is said, *"Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew 13:43)*, and the Book of Psalms says, *"For the LORD knows the way of the righteous, But the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Psalm 1:6)*. The Book of Revelation says that only the holy, only the righteous, enter that kingdom. Yet people say there are no righteous people. The Bible says that people perish because of this stubbornness. I cannot tell you how stubborn those who believe in God are. Once they have learned some doctrine, they keep being stubborn about it.

If the Bible says it is not so, we should say, "Ah, I see," and however stubborn we may have been, before God we should say, "It is not so. If God says it is not so, then what I have is nothing." Isn't that the right attitude? Yet, just as they are stubborn before people, there are very many people who, while God says there are righteous people, say there are none; while God says He has made people righteous, say He has not; and while God says He has taken away all sins, say He has not—being stubborn to the end, even to this day, and ending up in the grave without having submitted before God. Among the Jews, too, there are many who are so stubborn that they still do not believe in Jesus. They do not accept the fact that Jesus is the Savior and the Messiah. The Bible says that people are judged because of that stubbornness.

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The laying on of hands and baptism, the way sins are passed on

The Gospel of John says, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*, and the Book of Hebrews, saying that Jesus took away all the sins of the world not many times but once and for all, records, *"With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12)*. It also says, *"Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17)*. The Bible says that all the sins of this world were passed on to Jesus Christ about two thousand years ago, when Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist. The word "baptism" means to be passed on, to be transferred. It means to be buried, to be washed.

But today some people understand this baptism not as meaning to be buried or to be washed, but as something else. There are very many who say that Jesus received baptism out of humility, and very many who teach so. Words have precise meanings. I do not understand how they can take the meaning of baptism that way. Let us look at Leviticus chapter 1 in the Old Testament. *"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock. (If his oblation be a burnt-offering of the herd, he shall offer it a male without blemish: he shall offer it at the door of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before Jehovah –ASV). Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:2–4)*. It says that when one brings an offering such as an ox or a sheep before God, one must bring a male without blemish, and must not bring it just as it is. As for how to bring it,

it says to lay one's hands on the head of the burnt offering so that God may gladly accept it. Leviticus chapter 1 says that then it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

Then what does the term "the laying on of hands" mean? The laying on of hands means precisely to pass on. It means that when a person who has sin brings an animal and lays his hands on the head of that animal, his sin is passed on to the head of the animal. So the laying on of hands means to be passed on, to be transferred. We must know that. The laying on of hands in the Old Testament is precisely baptism in the New Testament. Jesus Christ came to this earth and received baptism from John; He received it Himself in order to have the sins of mankind passed on to Him. That has exactly the same meaning as the laying on of hands. His having sins passed on to Him in this way leads to the judgment of the Cross. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross. We believe in the eternal redemption He accomplished by rising again from death.

Just as sins are transferred to the sheep or the ox when hands are laid on it, Leviticus chapter 16 records the Day of Atonement, on which a year's worth of sins was atoned for. There appears the part where, on the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, the high priest lays his hands on behalf of the people of Israel and passes on their sins. Just as sins were passed on to the animal when hands were laid on it in the Old Testament, just as a year's worth of sins was passed on to that sacrificial offering, in the New Testament all sins were passed on completely to Jesus Christ when Jesus received baptism from John. It means that all our sins were passed on to Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus is called the Lamb of God. This is the truth the Bible speaks of, and this is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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The gospel means good news. Of this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the apostle Paul said, *"It is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16)*. Just as a huge rock is shattered to pieces and disappears when dynamite is set off, when Jesus received baptism from John all our sins were passed on to Jesus, and Jesus bore the sins of all the people of the world and, by His death on the Cross, caused the sins of mankind to be judged. Then sin has come to an end. This is exactly the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible speaks of. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is not something that some denomination says; it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God speaks of in the Bible. If one does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one perishes. One must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One must not be so stubborn as to say, "I learned it there, and I am already set. Even though there is sin in my heart, I have received the remission of sins." If one truly believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the sin in one's heart disappears. It all flies away. I hope you will know the fact that an impenitent heart brings the judgment of God upon itself.

Verse 5 of chapter 2 said that in accordance with an impenitent heart one treasures up wrath in the day when the righteous judgment of God is revealed. A truly upright person must repent. Man is different from beasts. To realize one's wrong and turn around is what makes a human being. There are old things, traditions, and many people believe in those traditions. But do they truly accord with the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Are they really the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus Christ has removed all sins just as He says in the Bible? There are very many traditions that are not right. We must not have an impenitent heart. If there is still sin in your heart, you must abandon your stubbornness, repent, and

believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in order to live. Then what is the true gospel of the water and the Spirit? That Jesus has taken away all the sins of this world is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"Circumcision is that of the heart"

I will read one passage of Scripture and then speak on this part. *"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God" (Romans 2:28–29).* Among the people of Israel, all the males were circumcised on the eighth day after birth. But the word says that cutting off the flesh of the body alone is not circumcision.

As for believing in God, too, the Bible says that believing legalistically, merely imitating, or merely following along after the word is not believing. What is truly believing? Circumcision is that of the heart; that is, we must believe in Jesus Christ with our hearts. Only when we believe in Jesus Christ with our hearts do our sins disappear. Do you believe with your heart the fact that Jesus Christ had all sins passed on to Him when He received baptism from John, the fact that He took away all the sin of the world?

Circumcision is that of the heart: when one knows it with one's heart and believes it with one's heart, when one confirms in one's heart the fact that Jesus has taken away all sins, that is when a person rends his heart and settles it in his heart. When one believes in Jesus Christ with one's heart, saying, "God, I believe," that person is truly one of the people of God. It is not

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achieved by merely attending outwardly and merely sitting down and standing up in one's seat. What matters is not tradition, nor how much of the word of God one knows, but whether or not one truly believes in one's heart that Jesus took away the sin of the world, that Jesus has also taken away all the sins I commit with my heart.

Do we truly believe this Scripture, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, with our hearts? Even though we are lacking and weak and have faults and sins, do we believe with our hearts that the Lord has taken all of that away, too? When we believe that, we have received the circumcision of the heart. When we believe with our hearts, there is no sin in our hearts. When we truly know and believe in Jesus Christ with our hearts, when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts and believe the word and are grafted into it, we can live as righteous people with not a single sin in our hearts. The circumcision of the heart lies in the faith that accepts the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart. It is to believe that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world, including of course the sins in our hearts, passed on to Him once and for all, and that He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in our place. It is to receive in our hearts the fact that Jesus rose again from death and made us live.

The apostle Paul is saying that no matter how much one comes to know by thought, by knowledge, by doctrine, or by tradition, it is of no use. It means that it is not achieved that way. We must receive the circumcision of the heart. I hope you will truly believe in Jesus Christ with your heart as your Savior, and believe with your heart that Jesus Christ has taken away all your sins. Only then is that person righteous and a child of God. Only then can one follow the Lord with a clean spirit that has not a single sin in the heart.

If one does not believe with the heart, there is sin in the heart; if one believes with the heart, there is no sin in the heart. It is said that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and that circumcision is to be done not outwardly but in the heart, in the spirit. Only when we believe in Jesus Christ with our hearts do we have no sin in our hearts and no sin in our souls, so that we can live a life of faith before the Lord with that clean heart. Do you believe with your heart the fact that Jesus took away the sin of the world? Do you believe with your heart the fact that we are lacking before God? Do you believe the fact that Jesus has taken all of that away, too? That is faith. When one believes in this way, when one believes by settling it in one's heart just as the word says, freedom of heart comes to that person. This is exactly what the Bible says. Circumcision is to be performed not outwardly but in the heart.

How wrong we are in our hearts, and how many faults we have! But when we believe the fact that Jesus Christ has taken away all the sins in our hearts, the fact that when He took away the sin of the world He also took away these shortcomings in my heart, we can rest in the word and enjoy freedom. We can enjoy to the full His being rich in mercy. I cannot tell you how important the heart is. That is why the Bible says that circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter. It means that it is not in the letter, not in knowing. "The letter" refers to the written code of the law. It is not achieved by memorizing the words and verses of the Bible; it is to settle in one's heart that word in which God, who truly took away the sin of the world, said that He will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.

Believing is like clapping hands together. When the other person says, "That's right," it is to say, "Yes, I think so, too." When it is said, "God has taken away all sins," to say, "Yes, that

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is right"—this is exactly what faith is. It is clapping hands together. But if one says, "God took away sins. But then, He did not," that is not faith. It is to say, "Yes, He took them away." When the Lord says, "I have taken away all the sins you committed with your conscience, dead through your sins and faults, with your dead heart, and all the sins you committed in deed," it is to say, "Yes, that is so." The word we believe to be right testifies of the salvation accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus bore the sin of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received that judgment in our place by the blood He shed on the Cross, and He rose again from death. The sins of our hearts, too, are included in all those sins and have already been resolved.

Sin is not somewhere else; it is in the heart of man. A sin committed in thought is forgotten in two or three seconds. One can think, even after committing a sin, as if one had not committed it, or one can rationalize that this is not a sin. But one cannot do anything about the sin that is in the heart. When I admit before Jesus Christ that there is sin in my heart and believe that word of Jesus Christ, that word becomes good medicine to me, and in actual fact every part is cleanly resolved. This is faith. Romans chapter 2 is speaking of this.

The forbearance that passed over the sins that were previously committed

How rich in mercy God is! It was asked whether you despise the riches of His longsuffering, and He is truly rich in it. It is said that the Lord has taken away the sin of this world, and we do not sin merely once or twice. The heart boils over like a pot at the

slightest thing going wrong. How often our hearts go wrong! But when we believe in Jesus even with that wrong heart, that heart that has sinned, when we believe the fact that Jesus, the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world, took away all my sins, our hearts enjoy freedom at all times in the love of God, who is rich in mercy. Swimming and frolicking to our hearts' content in that sea of grace, we live enjoying freedom in the truth, just as the word says, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. This is precisely the riches of God, His goodness, and His forbearance. How great the forbearance of God is!

Even we who have received the remission of sins very often have hearts that go wrong. Even so, our Lord has forborne even that, and has borne even that. Do you believe that with your heart? The Lord says, "I knew you would be like that. Because I knew you would be like that, I took away the sin of the world. Do you understand, then, that I have loved you?" Who could fully know how powerful, how loving, and how merciful our Lord is? The apostle Paul experienced this. He experienced in his heart the fact that Jesus Christ was his Savior, and he knew how rich God's mercy is, how great His love is, and how much He has forborne. Even when Christians go wrong, our Lord has forborne all of that.

The Bible speaks of it as follows. *"Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25)*. It is said that Jesus became the propitiation. Our being moved again from the state of being judged, from the state of perishing, into the kingdom of the Son of God and receiving His love comes about when we believe in Jesus Christ, who is the propitiation through faith. This means that Jesus did not merely become the

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propitiation, but that when we accept and believe with our hearts all that Jesus Christ has done, the relationship between us and God the Father is reconciled. It is not enough merely to know Jesus. We must believe.

The word that in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed is a word that goes together with the word "forbearance." To pass over means to look past, not to look at. About two thousand years ago, our Lord came to this earth, bore all the sins of the world on His own head when He received baptism from John, and died on the Cross in place of you and me, in place of those who have sin in their hearts. He suffered the judgment. And He rose from the dead in three days and ascended, going up to the kingdom of God. The Book of Hebrews says, *"This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12)*. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross.

Sitting there, the Lord says, even when those who have received the remission of sins happen to go wrong in their hearts and commit filthy sins in their hearts, "Knowing you would be like that, I pass over that sin, too. I have removed that sin, too. I have removed that sin of your heart, too." Our Lord is the One who, already seated as the Lord of judgment at the end of eternal time, can say that He has removed that sin and that sin, all of them. The word "passed over" means to look past. He says, "For that, too, I was judged, and that, too, I bore." This is precisely the faith that believes in Jesus Christ.

The Bible says that God, in His forbearance, meant to demonstrate His righteousness by passing over the sins that were previously committed, and then it goes on to say, *"To*

demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). This word means that God first unilaterally removed all the sins of everyone's hearts and the sins of their deeds, and that when people believe with their hearts in that fact, in that love, in that gospel of the water and the Spirit, He Himself, who has done what is right, is just, and He also calls those who believe in that work righteous, just as He called Abraham righteous. In this way, through faith, He makes us become children of God and become righteous. He makes us become people without sin. God has forborne in this way.

Even though we have received the remission of sins, we are still very likely to go wrong. But what happens? Because God has forborne, we can be restored again before the Lord through faith in our hearts and follow the Lord with a clean heart. If the Lord were to beat us with a club every time we did wrong after receiving the remission of sins, we would all have died long ago. If He were to follow us around nitpicking, saying that we did this wrong and that wrong, how could we live? I cannot tell you how wide, great, perfect, and meticulous the love of God is. Just as parents accept everything about their child, and just as they prepare all the diapers knowing that a baby cannot control its bowels and bladder, Jesus Christ, knowing that we would go wrong after receiving the remission of sins, bore the sin of the world in order to bear even those sins.

Faith is believing with the heart

Do you believe with your heart? We must not forsake that abundant grace of God and that love, and the faith that believes in Jesus Christ. We must always believe in the Lord with our

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hearts, give thanks before the Lord with our hearts, and come before the Lord with our hearts. Then we can follow the Lord.

We have looked at the word of Romans chapter 2. The person who judges others deserves to be judged, since he commits the same sins himself even after judging others. We, too, commit the same sins, so why are these people judged? Such a result came about because they despised the riches of God, because they were stubborn, because they did not believe that God has taken away all sins but obstinately and stubbornly refused it. In Romans chapter 2, the apostle Paul is speaking this word to the Jews, to the Gentiles who do not believe in God, and to those who do believe in God but despise the perfect riches of God. The gospel of the water and the Spirit says that for those who reject the truth of God there is judgment, and for those who truly believe in Jesus Christ with their hearts there is the abundant grace of God.

We, too, were like that in the past. Even after believing in Jesus to our hearts' content, we committed the same sins, and we heard it said that those who believe in Jesus and those who do not are the same, or that believers are even worse. We, too, were such people, but our Lord has washed away all those sins of ours. So, out of gratitude, we believe in Jesus Christ with our hearts. I believe with my heart that the Lord has borne all my sins and faults. The faith that receives salvation is the faith that believes with the heart. And so the object of the faith that believes with the heart is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even our faults, transferred to Him once and for all, and He shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, rose again from death, and made us live.

Knowing is knowing with the head, and believing is believing with the heart. That is why God gave man intellect,

emotion, and will, and made him a personal being. He made man different from beasts so that he would not believe blindly or act blindly. I believe that if one truly believes in God, in Jesus Christ, with one's heart, God will surely give grace to that person according to the faith with which he believes. We give thanks to God once again for the fact that we are people who truly believe with our hearts and so attain to righteousness, not people who go forward by works. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

God looks at the innermost heart

< Romans 2:1–29 >

"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God,

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but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, 'Do not commit adultery,' do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For 'the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,' as it is written. For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."

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People who believe in Jesus and yet have not been born again

Those who have been saved, those who have received the remission of sins from God, and those who have been born again through the word of God are blessed people. They are those who have fulfilled the purpose for which they were born on this earth. When a person is born on this earth and receives the remission of sins, the purpose for which God made us has been fulfilled. God made us and caused us to be born on this earth, and He causes us to be born again, causes us to receive the remission of sins, makes us sinless, and so makes us His people. This is the plan by which God made us, and it is the purpose within that plan.

For a person to be born on this earth and to meet the word of truth is like gaining a tremendous treasure. For a person to be born on this earth and to meet and realize the way of truth is a tremendous thing. It is truly a blessing. A person is to believe in Jesus and receive the remission of sins, and those who truly believe in Jesus correctly actually become righteous people without sin before God, actually become children of God, receive the blessings God gives, have the kingdom of heaven in the world to come as their own, and on this earth live under God's care and blessing. But those who believe in Jesus and yet have not received the remission of sins believe in Jesus in vain. Those who say they believe and yet have not received the remission of sins have believed in Jesus in vain, and even if they keep on believing, they believe in vain.

There are two kinds of people in this world. There are people who have believed in Jesus, met the truth, and received the remission of sins cleanly and completely in their hearts. Such people are called the righteous. They are also called the saved,

the born-again, those blessed by God, and the children of God. Such a person is a blessed person. But there are people who, even though they believe in Jesus, believe in Jesus while still not having received the remission of sins. Such people are in fact those who have not been born again and who have no blessing. They are those who believe in Jesus in vain. Concerning those who have not been born again, the apostle Paul, in Romans chapter 2, speaks of the Jews and the Greeks, and in doing so speaks of those who have been born again of God and those who have not been born again. Being born again takes place when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of those sins. By believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished by rising again from death, we have become children of God.

Looking at chapter 2, verse 1, it says, *"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (Romans 2:1)*. This is now speaking to those who have not been born again. It is saying that those who have not been born again judge others.

There are people who, though they believe in Jesus and have not been born again, and though they themselves have sin in their hearts, judge people who have sin and judge the deeds of others. For people who believe in Jesus and yet have not been born again, their life of faith is all in vain. Claiming that they know the law of God and practice the law, they judge people who do not believe in Jesus. They judge, saying that this person is chosen or not chosen, that this person is going to hell or not, that this person is a bad person or not, and they say that someone keeps the law or does not keep it, lives according to the word or

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does not. But in reality, a person who has not been born again commits the very same sins himself. Whether people do not believe in Jesus and have not been born again, or believe in Jesus and yet have not been born again, they are the same people committing the same sins.

"You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, 'Do not commit adultery,' do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?" (Romans 2:21–23). Even a person who believes in Jesus and has not been born again knows that stealing is wrong, because he knows the law of God. And he tells people not to steal. Yet he himself steals, and while telling others not to commit adultery, he himself commits adultery. Robbing temples means that, although one knows God's first commandment not to serve idols, if there is an image of a god made of gold or a treasure in a temple where idols are served, one steals it and brings it away. All who have not been born again are like this.

A hollow, outward faith dishonors God

Those who have not been born again boast of the word of God. They boast greatly of the law of God, saying that if you believe in Jesus you are saved, that you must not serve idols, that you must not murder, and that you must not take the name of God in vain. They boast to those who have not been born again. They boast, saying, "We are the people who serve only the LORD God; we are the people of God; we have no idols; all other gods are idols." They boast of the word of God and the law of God in this way, but they dishonor God by breaking that law

themselves. Those who have not been born again say that Jesus is the Savior and yet oppose Jesus. A person who does not believe in Jesus opposes Jesus, but those who say they believe in Jesus are also opposing Jesus themselves. God hates most of all those who call themselves Christians and yet reject the love of Jesus and the salvation of Jesus.

As for how the apostle Paul brings this part in, in Romans chapter 2, he speaks by taking up the Jews, the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh. The Jews say that they are the people of God, the chosen people, those who know well and keep well the statutes of God, and those who follow the will of God. But in reality the Jews rejected Jesus, rejected the love of Jesus, rejected the salvation of Jesus, rejected the divinity of Jesus, and opposed everything. When Jesus said that He was the Son of God, they opposed Him, saying that He should be crucified and killed. When Jesus said that He was the Son of God and God, they said He was arrogant and blasphemous, and they spat in His face, struck Him on the cheek, opposed Him, and despised Him. What Jesus, who is God, did when He came as a man is our salvation. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, not to mention the sins of the Jews and the Gentiles, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death.

Just as there were Jews who rejected Jesus, there are also people today who claim to believe in Him while denying His divinity. There are also those who acknowledge His divinity but do not fully believe in the saving work He accomplished. What else do they reject? While saying that Jesus is the Savior, they reject Him as not being the Savior, saying that He took away only original sin and has not yet taken away actual sins. Also, while believing in Jesus and knowing the word of God well,

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spreading it well, and teaching it well to people, they do not believe this word. Among Christians today, those who have not been born again do not believe this word. So they say that one must not believe all of the word of God literally, that one must not believe the Bible just as it is written. Such people are judged by God. Just as those who, as Jews of the Old Testament era, claimed to believe well in the LORD God and yet rejected Jesus are judged, so those today who call themselves Christians and yet do not believe according to the word that Jesus has removed all their sins, that He has removed even their future sins, receive the judgment of God.

If one claims to believe in God while leaving out Jesus, it is the same whether one is a Jew or one of those today who call themselves Christians and yet have not been born again. Even if, boasting of the word and claiming to keep the word, one is a teacher to others, a guide to the blind, one who has true knowledge, and one who teaches others, if one does not believe in Jesus—that is, if one does not believe that Jesus is one's Savior and has become the Savior who has already removed all one's sins—believing in Jesus is of no benefit to oneself. If one believes in Jesus and yet has not been born again, then no matter how well one believes in Jesus and no matter how well one does in one's deeds in that state of not being born again, it is of no benefit at all.

The apostle Paul expresses this as follows. You call yourselves Jews and yet do not keep the law of God but break it, and you say you have received circumcision and yet do not keep the law of God, so what kind of people of God are you? If, while rejecting Jesus and breaking the word of God, you say that you are saved by keeping the law of God well, then you have broken the law, and if, on the contrary, the Gentiles keep the law of God well, are they not better people than you? He explains it by

contrasting them in this way. When we say we believe in Jesus, what is it that we believe? Do we believe in the commandments God has commanded us? Do we believe that following, keeping, and doing only those commandments is believing in God? No. Believing in God is believing in Jesus Christ.

Believing in Jesus is believing that Jesus has removed all my sins and has become my Savior. If one does not believe correctly in the fact that Jesus has become one's Savior, then no matter how well one keeps the law of God, no matter how well one keeps the statutes of God, no matter how holily one prays, no matter how high one's position rises, and no matter how well one believes in Jesus, it is all void. It is all believing in vain. That is why the apostle Paul says that he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and that the person who has truly been chosen before God in his heart and has received the remission of sins in his heart is one of God's people. It means that one is not one of the people of God just because one carries the Bible around in a hollow, outward way, attends church in a hollow, outward way, or holds some position in a hollow, outward way. The true people of God are those who truly have in their hearts the faith that believes in Jesus, have in their hearts the remission of sins, and have in their hearts the evidence of believing in the word of God. Such people are the true people of God, those who have been saved by God, those who will go to the kingdom of heaven, and those to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs. The evidence in their hearts lies in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. It is to believe that Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including even our secret sins, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and that He shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of those sins. Receive into your hearts Jesus, who rose again from death and has given life.

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The one who believes with the heart is a Jew inwardly

What good is it to believe well in Jesus only perfunctorily? What good is it to believe in Jesus ever so well only perfunctorily, with sin in one's heart? A believer in Jesus who shows it only outwardly is not a true believer in Jesus. Who are the true believers in Jesus, the true children of God, those who have been saved by God? They are those who have in their hearts the faith that believes in the heart, "Jesus is my Savior, and Jesus has saved me by the water, the blood, and the Spirit." Those who have this faith are the very ones who believe in Jesus, and those who believe correctly are the children of God.

Those who truly believe in their hearts, "Jesus has removed all my sins and has saved me," are the ones who believe in Jesus; it means that one is not a person who believes in Jesus just because one carries the Bible in a hollow, outward way, attends church well in a hollow, outward way, gives offerings well in a hollow, outward way, merely pretends to believe in Jesus in a hollow, outward way, and lives a good life in a hollow, outward way by not smoking or drinking. What the apostle Paul is saying is that circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter. It means that even with circumcision, one has not become one of the people of God just because one has cut off a piece of skin outwardly; rather, those who have the circumcision of the heart, who believe in their hearts from the very heart, "Jesus has cut off all my sins and taken them away; He has completely removed them; all my sins have been passed on; Jesus bore my sins in my place, received the judgment on the Cross for me, and saved me; when Jesus received baptism from John, He bore all my sins and took them all away, and He received the judgment in my place on the Cross and paid the price of my sins," are the

people of God. Such people are those who believe in Jesus, the true people of God, and the righteous.

So when we believe in Jesus, from whom do we receive praise? Who receives praise before God? Those who believe correctly in Jesus with their hearts, those who know the truth and believe the truth with their hearts, receive praise before God. Those who believe correctly with their hearts receive praise. What praise would those who are not like this receive? *"Whose praise is not from men but from God" (Romans 2:29)*. If we believe correctly in Jesus, we will receive praise before God and receive a reward from God. If one believes in Jesus only in a hollow, outward way, and has sin in one's heart even though one believes in Jesus, one will be judged by God.

Our God looks at whether one truly believes in Him. God has recorded in this word and conveyed to us that He has removed all our sins, and the question is whether one truly believes this written word. Because God looks at the innermost heart of a person, if that person believes the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth and saved him, God rejoices, praises him, and blesses him. He gives the blessing of salvation and the blessing of eternal life. But if one does not believe with the heart and comes out to the chapel only in a hollow, outward way and believes in Jesus only in a hollow, outward way, God dislikes and hates such people. He is the God who, on the last day, throws into the fire of hell those who come before Him claiming to believe in Him and going through much hardship, yet not believing with the heart but believing only in a hollow, outward way, only superficially. This is the kind of God He is. That is why it says, *"Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7)*. Do you believe with your heart? If you believe, He gives you blessing; but if you do not believe with your heart and only do well in a hollow, outward

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way, no matter how much you do, in the end He casts you into hell. The faith of the heart that God looks at is the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received that judgment in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross, and He rose again from death and gave us the remission of sins.

In fact, the greatest sin while believing in God is not believing with the heart in the saving work of Jesus while believing in Jesus. That becomes the greatest sin.

Do not despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance

Let us look at verse 4. The apostle Paul is speaking of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. *"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:4–5).* This is a word spoken precisely to the person who claims to believe in Jesus and yet believes outwardly. It is saying, "You claim to truly believe in Me, yet do you not know that God deals with you in goodness and has pity on you, and that He leads you to repentance?" That God has accepted us who sin means that God, on His part, in His goodness loved us, bore all our sins Himself, and completely resolved the sin problem of us insufficient people.

But it asks whether you despise these riches. God has led us to repentance. How did He lead us to repentance? God came to

this earth and led us to repentance. Our God led us to repentance, saying, "I have borne your sins through baptism, and I have received the judgment in your place. I have removed your sins. Believe in Me. Since I have removed your sins, believe in Me as the God of your salvation." With what did He lead us to repentance? He led us to repentance with the love of God, the atoning love of Jesus Christ. With that atoning love by which Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River and received the judgment on the Cross—the love by which He bore our sins in our place, received the judgment in our place, and removed our sins—He led all mankind to repentance.

There are two kinds of people who oppose this love and salvation of God. One kind is those who believe in Jesus merely religiously, outwardly, and who therefore do not know the truth and oppose Jesus. Even for such people, if they do not receive the remission of sins and do not repent to the end—if they do not turn their hearts and believe the fact that Jesus is their Savior, the fact that He bore all their sins when He received baptism from John, and the fact that He received the judgment in their place—it is hell. The other kind is those who refuse even though they know, those who hear this and know it and yet refuse it. For such people, needless to say, it is hell.

God has accepted us. How did He accept us? How insufficient we humans are! He accepted all of that insufficiency. To say that He accepted us means that He took responsibility for everything Himself. It means that He took responsibility Himself for every weak part of us humans and resolved it all. That is precisely what acceptance is. His resolving the problem Himself is acceptance. We commit sin until we die, but our Lord removed all our eternal sins once and for all. God has made us people without sin. He has made all mankind people without sin. Though we are insufficient, Jesus has removed all our sins. Then

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do we have sin, or not? We do not. If we believe in Jesus, if we believe in that abundant salvation of Jesus, that salvation of His goodness, we can become righteous people without sin in our hearts. In order to accomplish that eternal remission of sins, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. Since Jesus shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins and rose again from death, we, though insufficient, stand as righteous people by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

But there are people who despise this. What kind of people are those who despise it? They are those who believe in Jesus outwardly, those who believe in Jesus only in a hollow, outward way, those who regard the words of men more highly than the word of God, and those who form factions and oppose God. Forming factions means banding together in a group and gathering the strength of men to oppose the truth of God's salvation, to oppose Jesus. Where do such people who oppose the truth go? Verse 8 says, *"Unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation –ASV" (Romans 2:8)*.

"Tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek" (Romans 2:9). What is called anguish here refers to hell. It says that there will be tribulation and anguish for those who do evil. A person's committing sin is called transgression, but then what is doing evil? It is opposing the love of God head-on. It is challenging it and refusing it. This is doing evil. God sent Jesus to this earth, removed all their sins, made them righteous, and made them the people of God, a people who receive blessing, yet those who refuse and oppose this love of God suffer tribulation even on this earth. God is the One who gives blessing, and God is the One who gives what is best and what is most good; so how could

those who oppose God and oppose the love of God, who have opposed that utmost love by which God saved them through His own Son, that way of truth, that way of salvation, hope to live in peace?

Such people come to destruction. Even while living in the flesh on this earth, they suffer tribulation, and their souls suffer anguish. There is no satisfaction. And in the end they go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, the fire of hell. That is how it ends. Those who oppose God and oppose the love of God, the salvation of Jesus and the remission of sins, suffer even on this earth, and when they go to the world beyond, they go into the eternal fire of hell. I believe this word that there is tribulation and anguish for the spirit that does evil.

Abandon your stubbornness and turn around

There is one thing that those who believe in Jesus outwardly absolutely must do. There is one thing that those who do not know the love of Jesus and yet claim to believe in Jesus, who go to church and attend the chapel and yet have still not received the remission of sins, absolutely must do. They must abandon their stubbornness. They must abandon human stubbornness, the stubbornness of man. If one still has sin even though one believes in Jesus, one has clearly believed in Jesus wrongly. Regardless of through which denomination one came to believe in Jesus, if one claims to believe in Jesus and has believed since long ago, but has sin in one's heart, then that is believing wrongly. It is right that if one believes in Jesus one has no sin; to have sin in one's heart while believing in Jesus is believing in Jesus wrongly. The salvation one must abandon one's stubbornness and accept is made clear in the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit. After Jesus had all the sins of the world, not to mention our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross. Accept the remission of sins that He accomplished by rising again from death.

Let us say that a problem like the following comes up on an elementary school arithmetic test. A student went to a store, gave his father's name, and bought and ate snacks on credit, and later his father paid off all that debt. Then what would the answer be? Since the father paid everything that was eaten on credit, now there is no debt; you have no debt—this is the correct answer. Jesus is the Savior. He is the One who delivers us from sin. He has already come and become the One who delivered us from sin, and He has become the Lord who has removed all our sins, the sins of mankind. If so, there is no sin. If we have believed in Jesus correctly, we have no sin. But because one has known Jesus wrongly and believed wrongly, there is sin in one's heart. Then, if one has sin in one's heart now because one has believed wrongly, it means that one must abandon one's stubbornness. One must think, "I have believed this wrongly; I must turn around," and then listen to how one should believe to be right and what one has believed wrongly. So if, having listened, one has come to know the truth, thinking, "Ah, I did not know the baptism of Jesus. The baptism Jesus received from John was this important. Jesus died on the Cross because He had borne my sins, and that is why He could receive that judgment," and if one has seen the written word with one's eyes, heard it with one's ears, and gained understanding in one's heart, one must turn around. Those who do not turn around even though they know, those who do not abandon their stubbornness, are treasuring up wrath before God. Since it says that God *"will render to each one*

according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6), God renders to such people according to their deeds and throws them into the fire of hell.

That is why the Gospel of Matthew says, *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? –ASV" (Matthew 7:22)*. That day refers precisely to the time when those who have believed in Jesus outwardly go before God and are judged. They say, "Did I not believe in You well? Did I not cast out demons and speak in tongues in Your name? Did I not serve the Lord?" Then the Lord says, *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23)*. He is saying, "I removed all your sins, yet you did not believe that I removed your sins, and still, claiming to believe in Me, did you not cast out demons in My name, pray, give offerings, and praise the name of Jesus? You who practiced this lawlessness, you have sin, so go into the fire of hell." Those who do not repent, those who do not abandon their stubbornness, come to suffer the terrible wrath of God, the wrath of going into the fire of hell. Being stubborn is also a great sin before God. Even among the Jews, there are many who are so stubborn that to this day they do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

And among those who believe in Christianity today, there are also people who believe that Jesus could not remove all their sins, or that He removed them all but remits the sins they commit daily each time, whenever they repent daily. Such people, too, must abandon their stubbornness. Does Jesus remit our sins now when we pray? Some people bring up the word of 1 John and speak as follows: *"My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for*

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the whole world" (1 John 2:1–2). It says here that there is an Advocate, and that Advocate refers to Jesus. But the way they interpret this word is that Jesus took away all original sin, but the sins one commits in deed or in the heart after believing in Jesus must be confessed before God daily, and that when we confess, Jesus stands before God and pleads for us daily in our place, saying, "I have borne that person's sin." It is that whenever those who have not received the remission of sins commit sin in deed and say, "I have committed this sin; I have committed that sin," Jesus, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of God in the kingdom of heaven, speaks on their behalf. Interpreting the word that there is an Advocate so literally, there are people who say that sins are remitted daily, and that even now Jesus is doing the work of remitting the sins of sinners. So they say that they certainly believe in Jesus but have sin, that they have sin every day whenever they commit sin, and that whenever they pray prayers of repentance, they receive remission before Jesus daily.

Is that really so? No. It said that we have a righteous Advocate, and that He is not for us only but also for the sins of the whole world. What it means is that our Lord has already removed even the sins that we might commit after we have received the remission of sins and become the people of God. It means that He has removed even the future sins we will commit. And it means that He has not removed only the sins of us believers, but has removed the sins of all the people of the whole world. To be an Advocate means that the Lord speaks for us before the Father, saying, "Even the sins that this person who believes in Me committed after believing, I already bore two thousand years ago when I received baptism from John in the Jordan River." The One who speaks for us, saying, "I have become this person's Savior," is Jesus. That is the accurate

interpretation of the Bible. But is it right that whenever we commit sin, Jesus rises and says, "Father, please remit that sin," and remits our sins daily? Is the remission of sins something done once and for all, or is it something that keeps going on progressively, daily? Jesus removed our sins once and for all. Where did He bear them? When He received baptism from John in the Jordan River, He bore all our sins, the sins of all mankind in this world, once and for all. And then He went up once and for all onto the Cross on the hill of Golgotha and received the judgment once and for all. Yet people do not know this, and I cannot tell you how stubborn they are.

Speaking of stubbornness, I, too, am no ordinary stubborn person. When you come to know people, everyone is stubborn. Once they become stubborn about something, they absolutely do not yield. But before the word of God, before the truth, I yield. Receiving the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit before the word of God is repentance. And then, after receiving the remission of sins, our turning from what is wrong and striving to live rightly according to God's will and following it—that, too, is repentance, repentance in daily life. What happens to those who do not abandon their stubbornness? Let us read verse 5. *"But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Romans 2:5)*. What is that wrath that will come? It is going into the pit of fire. God's raising them again and saying, "Were you so stubborn, and did you despise Me so? Just as I live forever, you, too, shall live forever and gnash your teeth forever in the eternal pit of fire"—that is the wrath of God. When a person gets angry, he strikes once and is done with it. God does not do so. Because God is eternal, He is patient. He is patient, but if one does not return to the end, He casts him into the eternal

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fire of hell. That is how terrible the wrath of God is. Stubborn people, those who form factions and oppose Him, come to destruction. Those who believe in Jesus and yet believe without having received the remission of sins come to destruction. Such people, too, must abandon their stubbornness.

To those who asked, "What shall we do?" the apostle Peter said to repent and be baptized, and in the temple, too, he said, *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*. It means to repent and turn around, to know that Jesus has removed all your sins and believe that fact, and to receive the remission of your sins—to become completely righteous. It means that if you do so, you will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. This is what the apostles believed. One must not be stubborn before Jesus or before the truth. One should be stubborn only when it is right to be stubborn; if there is something one does not know, one must learn. How many teachers there are in this world, and how many things there are that we do not know and must learn! If I think I do not know this part, I should kneel even before a child and say, "Is that so? Please teach me," and listen, and if it is the truth, I should follow it—so why be stubborn? Before whom do you dare to be stubborn? Where do you think you are, daring to be stubborn before the word of truth, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit of salvation? If you keep being stubborn to the end before the truth, you will go into the eternal fire of hell. In Romans chapter 2, the apostle Paul sharply rebukes the Jew who is one outwardly, the Christian who is one outwardly. He tells us precisely the fact that those who believe only in a hollow, outward way, those who do not believe the word of God with their hearts, and those who, even when the word of God is told to them, do not receive it in their hearts and do not believe, go into the fire of hell. To turn around is to accept the gospel of the

water and the Spirit that Jesus has already accomplished. Because Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death.

God acknowledges each person according to what he believes

But those who truly believe receive blessing from God and obtain eternal life. Verse 7 says, *"Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality" (Romans 2:7)*. When people are told to believe this truth, they oppose it and mock it. They say that it is wrong, asking how a person who commits sin can become righteous, and that one is merely called righteous and one's sins do not really disappear. But in the Bible, God does not say so. God says, "If you believe in Me, since I have removed all your sins, you become one who has no sin. Because I have removed all your sins, you are righteous; you have no sin." He says, "Do you believe in Me? If you believe, you are My people. You have no sin."

God speaks of salvation and speaks of what is complete. He says that He has saved us once and for all, that we have become righteous. But the outward Christians of the world mock those who believe in that Jesus who has removed all our sins once and for all. They say, how can a person become righteous when he commits sin? He is merely declared to be without sin, so how can he really become one without sin? He will sin again tomorrow, so how can he be righteous? That happens because they do not believe in God. It spoke of those who patiently

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continue in doing good, and our believing in God is doing good. Believing is doing good. Those who patiently continue in doing good and seek glory, honor, and immortality are those who want to become children of God, who want to become righteous, and who want to live forever with eternal life. We humans have a heart that wants to become children of God, a heart that wants to become righteous, and a heart that longs for eternal life, never dying for all eternity. To those who want these things and wish to live as people without a single sin, those who want to become children of God, those who believe in Jesus—to such people He gives eternal life. He makes them never die for all eternity, makes them the people of God for all eternity, gives them blessings for all eternity, and with such things God repays them. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, even our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received that judgment in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, and so we, who have become righteous by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, hope for eternal life.

Those who truly ask God for what they ought to ask, those who ask for what is truly precious, ask as follows: "God, I want to live as a person without sin. If there is a way to receive the remission of sins, I want to receive it. I want to become righteous. I do not want to live as a sinner. I want to live without a speck of shame before heaven or earth. I want to become one who pleases God." To those who truly believe in God, those who seek righteousness before God, it says, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33)*. To those who truly seek righteousness from God, who seek what is truly right before God and who, hearing God say that He can make them sinless, say, "I want to become a person without sin. Please save me," to those who long for the remission of sins that God gives, the

remission of sins that makes one righteous once and for all—such people God makes righteous, and to those who want to live enjoying eternal life with God forever, He makes them His people so that they can live forever, gives them eternal life, and gives them blessings.

God never, at any time, says no. He acknowledges a person just as he believes. If one says, "Jesus, You did not take away all my sins. You took away only original sin and could not take away actual sins," what does Jesus say? He says, "Yes, is that what you believe? Then I, too, will acknowledge it. You are going to hell." God acknowledges those who believe that way accordingly. But to the one who believes, saying, "Jesus, You have removed all my sins. You are my Savior. I believe that You bore my sins when You received baptism from John in the Jordan River, received the judgment on the Cross in my place, died in my place, and rose again to make me live, and that You are now seated at the right hand of the throne of God as the Lord of judgment. I believe that the Lord is my Savior," He says, "Your faith is right. You are My people. You are righteous. You are the people of the kingdom of heaven." God acknowledges that faith, too, as right. The Psalms say, *"With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd" (Psalm 18:26)*. To the devious, God shows what is devious, and to those who truly believe, He reveals the truth. To the wicked He shows what is wicked, and He guards with a flaming sword so that the wicked who are stubborn to the end can never return to the truth. Therefore, people must turn around. They must repent, abandon their stubbornness, and turn around. Only then can they realize their own evil, and when God says, "You are such a sinner," they say, "Yes, that is right. I am such a sinner," and when He says, "But I have removed all your sins. So you have no sin," they say, "God, that is right. I believe." As

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for such people, who follow God entirely and believe entirely, our God fills them with the blessing of eternal life, the blessing of righteousness, and the blessing of becoming children of God.

It said that to those who are stubborn, who form factions and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, there will be indignation and wrath. It means that to those who form denominations, form factions, and band together in groups to oppose the truth of God, those who follow sin and do not follow the truth, there will be indignation and wrath. *"Glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:10–11)*. It means that no one is excluded, whoever he may be. It means that it applies to all. Whether one believes in Jesus or not, whether one is a Jew or one of those who now call themselves Christians and attend church with sin still in them, to anyone at all who opposes the truth this applies equally, and they are judged. And regardless of whether the chapel is small or the denomination is shabby, He is the God who rewards with eternal life those who truly believe in their hearts the fact that Jesus is their Savior, those who believe that Jesus has completely saved them from all sin by the truth, by the water, the blood, and the Spirit. Our God treats those who believe in Jesus and those who do not by the same standard.

The law of conscience and God's impartial judgment

Then will God not judge those who do not believe in Jesus? There are those who say that people who do not believe in Jesus would believe if they heard, but how can they believe when they have not even heard? That is not so. The reason it is not so is that

the word said that even those who do not know the law know by themselves, by the law of conscience in their nature, what is right and what is wrong, and act accordingly, so this person is one who does the law by conscience, one who does the law of God. For example, let us say that someone has never heard the word of God and has been believing in another religion. That person does not know the law of God and does not know the commandments of God. Because he does not know the commandments, he has not realized his sins through them, but in reality, in his heart, he realizes his own sins. It means that he seeks, thinking, "Oh, I have sinned again. I have done wrong again. If I go on like this, I will go to hell; I must find a Savior; what must I believe to be saved; how can I receive the remission of sins?" If one truly seeks and seeks, God meets him. But the point is that they do not seek at all. God has taught everyone, even through the law of conscience, that you who go against God's commandments are sinners and people who go to hell; yet because humans are evil and do not seek God, do not ask God for help, and do not believe in or call on Jesus Christ, their Savior, they go to hell. They come to go to hell as the price of their own sins, as the payment for them. There are people who ask what becomes of the people of the era before the gospel of the water and the Spirit was spread, but even in that era, if anyone truly sought and called on God, our God met him in whatever form.

In this age, Jesus has already come to this earth, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit has been spread far and wide throughout the whole world. Yet there are so many who do not believe, and those who are born again are a very small minority. There are many who call themselves Christians, but as the word says, *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10)*. According to this word, how many are there who have

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truly believed with the heart unto righteousness and confessed with the mouth unto salvation, who have become completely righteous? How many are there who know according to the truth and believe according to the truth? There are many who are so stubborn that they say, “I belong to such-and-such a denomination, so what is the matter? Original sin is remitted, and actual sins one repents of daily in prayer, and later, when one dies, one is sanctified and becomes righteous before God and goes to the kingdom of heaven. How can one become righteous by believing once and for all? Believing that way is wrong.” In fact, they all come to destruction. The apostle Paul is now saying in Romans chapter 2: Is there anyone who believes with the heart? Is there anyone who believes accurately with the heart in the way of the truth of Jesus? That person receives the blessing of eternal life; he is one who has received the blessing of never dying and living happily with God forever. What must be believed with the heart is also clear. It is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, that He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and that He rose again from death and gave us eternal life.

But the apostle Paul is saying that those who have not believed according to the word of truth, those who, even though they believe, have serious sin in their hearts, those who, when they sin tomorrow, again have sin in their hearts and whose sin does not go away even if they pray to God to remit their sins, and those who, though they believe in Jesus, have serious sin in their hearts, must abandon their stubbornness, and that if they do not abandon their stubbornness, they will go to hell. Do you think a person will receive praise from God just because he believes in Jesus and keeps the law well, keeps God’s

commandments well, and acts according to the word? If a person believes in Jesus and yet, not knowing in his heart the fact that Jesus has removed all his sins, not believing it but opposing it, keeps almost all of this word throughout his whole life, that person is one of the people who go to hell. Jesus did not demand of us that we keep this word one hundred percent. What God wanted was people who receive the remission of sins by believing the fact that His Son Jesus bore all our sins and received the judgment in our place and became the God of our salvation, the fact that He became the Lord of salvation. He did not want people who live one hundred percent according to this word. It says, *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)*, and *"There is none who does good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12)*. There was no one who would live according to this word. We have already failed to live according to this word from the time we were children.

Believing is what is good before God

But even now there are people who, while saying that they believe in Jesus and attend church, attend with sin in their hearts. Claiming to live according to the will of God and to live keeping the law, they say that salvation is observing days, being selective about what they eat, and living while keeping the ordinances of the Old Testament law according to this word. They say that one goes to the kingdom of God only by believing in Jesus and, in addition to that, living according to this word, and that this is the will of the Father. But the will of the Father is that we believe in His Son and receive the remission of sins. *"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"*

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(John 3:16). God's sending His Son into this world was so that all people would obtain everlasting life and be saved. We are saved by believing in Jesus; we are saved by accepting the salvation Jesus accomplished; it is absolutely not that we are saved by keeping and doing all of this word. If you and I were saved by keeping this word, if we had to believe in Jesus but also keep all of this word in order to go to the kingdom of heaven, then who among you and me could go to the kingdom of heaven? Even if we lived only one day, we could not go. We would have to die as soon as we received the remission of sins in order to go, but even in the interval between receiving the remission of sins and dying, a bad thought would already arise, so it is utterly impossible.

The only Savior is Jesus alone. Only by believing in Jesus can we go to the kingdom of heaven. Only if we believe in Jesus do our sins disappear. We are saved, at the very least, only if we believe these few things: what Jesus did when He came to this earth, namely, that He saved us from sin, that He received baptism from John the Baptist and received the judgment in our place on the Cross, that He died and rose again and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and that Jesus, who is God, came to this earth clothed in human flesh. Do you think that keeping the word, doing good, living a good life, keeping the commandments of God, and helping and giving to those in need because it says to love your neighbor as yourself—do you think that becomes our salvation? Do you think that is what is good? Believing in the love God has bestowed on us, that is, in Jesus, is what is good before God. That is what is right, and that is what is good and proper. The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes known to us how Jesus accomplished that love. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from

John, He received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death.

We must not be foolishly stubborn, but if there is something wrong, we must turn around. If we have believed in Jesus wrongly, we must turn around. We must be saved. It says, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. You blind guides who claim to believe without even knowing how Jesus bore your sins and how He removed them, you outward believers of Christianity, you pastors, repent! Abandon your stubbornness! Only then will that salvation of God come upon you. We must know clearly and believe. The apostle Paul spoke of this part. Those who have not been born again must abandon their stubbornness, believe in Jesus correctly, and know and believe that truth. It is not something achieved by doing one's deeds correctly. And we who have believed must know and believe the fact that we have obtained eternal life before God, the fact that we have become those who live happily with God forever and ever, and the fact that we have received such a blessing, and we must live with hope and faith, giving thanks to God. I give thanks before God. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in your own heart the word you teach to others

< Romans 2:17–29 >

“Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For ‘the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,’ as it is written. For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision

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is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God."

In the face of the confidence of knowing the word

After explaining the word of the Bible to others, it is easy to feel, "I believe that word, too." Since one can tell others what is right and what is wrong, one supposes that there is no problem with one's own faith either. But what should one do if the words one teaches are clear, yet in one's own heart there remains sin that has not been resolved? Today's word asks us whether the knowledge we can speak to others and the salvation we have received in our own hearts are the same thing.

Paul says, *"Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God" (Romans 2:17)*. This is a word directed at the person who relies on the fact that he has received the law and on the name of being the people of God. That person has learned the will of God and discerns what is good, and he thinks that he is even qualified to show others the right way. The fact of having received the word from God is precious, but when one makes that fact the basis for one's own righteousness, one fails to see one's own self as it is exposed before the word. This word was spoken not only to the Jews of that time; it is a word spoken in exactly the same way to all of us who today claim to believe in Jesus and yet have not received the remission of sins in our hearts.

For a person to know something well and to accept that word for himself are different things. Even if one can explain the teaching not to sin, one's own sin of having broken that teaching does not disappear by that. One can know how to point out the darkness of others while still holding on to the sin of one's own

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heart. The One who removed that sin is not the teaching person himself, but Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and then rose again from death. Therefore, we who know the word must examine, before speaking to others, "Is what I rely on knowledge about the word, or the Lord who has saved me in this way?" This question does not mean that we should not learn the word; it means that we should acknowledge that the word we have learned is a word that we ourselves also need.

When the words one teaches come back to oneself

Paul sets the teaching person before the word once again. The question, *"You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?" (Romans 2:21)*, cannot be evaded on the strength of one's record of having taught others. If, while preaching to others the commandments concerning stealing, adultery, and idols, one breaks those commandments oneself, then the very words one has taught also expose one's own wrong. This is because having preached the word with one's mouth cannot cover the sin of having broken that word.

Here we must not stop at finding the faults of others. Only when we accept the fact that the same commandment applies to our own cravings and our own deeds have we heard the word rightly. If one sets up a strict standard for others while trying to get out of it by explaining one's own circumstances, then even if one says one exalts the law, in reality one is exalting oneself. God's commandments were not entrusted to us so that we could judge only others.

That is why Paul gives the rebuke, *"You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?" (Romans 2:23)*. When the words and the life of a person who boasts of knowing God are at odds, even the name of God comes to be blasphemed because of him. While hearing this rebuke, we must not conclude that if we only correct our conduct from now on, all our sins will vanish. The command that we must stop transgressing is right, but a resolution for the future cannot remove the judgment for sins already committed. The person who has acknowledged his sin before the law needs a Savior who will actually remit that sin, and that Savior has already come. When Jesus received baptism from John, He had the whole sin of the world, which includes even the sins the teaching person has committed, passed on to Him, and He received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross.

The mark in the flesh cannot cover transgression

What the person who knows the law relied on was not knowledge alone. Because he also had the mark of having received circumcision in the flesh, he regarded himself as a person who belongs to God. But Paul says, *"If you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision" (Romans 2:25)*. This word means that if one wants to put forward one's own righteousness on the ground of doing the law, one must actually do that law, and that one cannot make the fact of having transgressed into something that never happened by showing the mark in the flesh.

The word that follows breaks down that boast by taking the case of a person who has not received circumcision and yet

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keeps the ordinances of the law. Can a person who has the mark, while breaking the commandments, claim to be more righteous than a person who has no mark? The person who put outward qualifications first cannot maintain that claim even in the face of his own deeds. That said, we must not take this contrast to mean that if one lives conscientiously, one is justified by God even without the remission of sins. Being recognized among people for right conduct and having one's own sins remitted before God are different matters.

We, too, must not make the outward appearance of our life of faith the basis of our own salvation. The fact that we have learned for a long time or the fact that we are respected by others cannot cut away the sin of the heart. Paul is not saying that it is all right to throw away the law; he makes clear that merely having the law cannot make one who has transgressed righteous. Therefore, the person who hears this word must not look for conditions that make him better than others, but must know how his own sin before God is remitted. The reassurance gained by comparing oneself with others cannot protect us in the face of the judgment of God. Before God, who exposes all sins, everyone must acknowledge his own sin without hiding anything and come to the Lord, who bore that sin. For although the mark engraved in the flesh cannot cover sin, the Lord had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid its price by shedding His blood on the Cross, and then rose again from death, and so He has actually removed sin.

The faith that cuts away the sin remaining in the heart

The text finally speaks of the circumcision we must receive. This is the word: "*Circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter" (Romans 2:29)*. It means that we must not be satisfied with having cut off a part of the flesh, but must receive the remission of the sin that is in the heart. This is not a demand to make ourselves into a state in which, by firmly bracing our hearts, we never have a single evil thought. We must believe with our hearts in Jesus, who has remitted all the sins of our hearts and our deeds.

Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John. He bore all of them—the sins that arose in our hearts and the sins we actually committed, the sins of the days gone by and even the sins we will commit as we go on living. Because of those sins He shed His blood and died on the Cross and received the judgment for sin in our place, and by rising again from the dead, He remitted our sins. We do not believe in our own lips that explained the law, but in Jesus, who has completely saved us in this way.

The circumcision of the heart is not leaving this salvation as a story that applies only to other people. It is believing that my sins exposed by the word are included in the sin of the world that Jesus bore, and that the Lord has also received the judgment I should have received. If one knows this fact only in one's head and does not believe it with one's heart, that sin remains as it is, and even if one believes only in the blood of the Cross while leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John, the sin of the heart is not cut off. Even after we believe, the shortcomings of the flesh are exposed, but the remission of sins the Lord accomplished does not disappear and reappear daily because of

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them. We give thanks to the Lord, who bore even those shortcomings, turn back from the wrong path, and follow the Lord with a heart that has received remission.

Because God acknowledges this faith, that praise does not come from men. Being called an excellent teacher by many people cannot take the place of the remission of the sin of the heart, but the person who has received in his heart the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross is the people of God, even if no one recognizes him. Being able to explain the word to others does not mean that even the sin of my own heart has been resolved, so let us now believe with our own hearts the word we teach. When we receive in our hearts the word we have been preaching with our lips and believe in the Lord, who has remitted all our sins, we come to live in the joy of the remission of sins ourselves while preaching the word of salvation to others. ✉

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CHAPTER

3

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You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

What advantage has the Jew?

< Romans 3:1–2 >

“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.”

In Romans chapter 3, the apostle Paul says that both Jews and Gentiles alike are saved from sin by believing in the righteousness of God. What is it that the Jews have over the Gentiles? First of all, it is that they were entrusted with the word of God. They had lived hearing the word of God from the time of their forefathers. So they thought that they were better than the Gentiles because they had heard the word of God and because the word of God had been handed down through them. But the Jews who did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God were cast away before God.

At the present time, there are those among Christians, too, who have this kind of faith. They acknowledge Jesus as their Savior and attend church, but they are sinners. In fact, these people are religious people. Because they have never obtained the righteousness of God after believing in Jesus, they are still sinners both before and after believing, and they are people who have gained no benefit from believing in Jesus.

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By not believing in the faithfulness of God

"For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.' But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just" (Romans 3:3–8).

Does the righteousness of God become void just because people do not believe in it? The righteousness of God does not simply disappear because people do not believe in the righteousness of God. In other words, the righteousness of God is not made void just because we do not believe in the righteousness of God. It is saying, how could the righteousness of God be made without effect just because people do not believe? For if the Jews do not believe in the righteousness of God, the Gentiles will believe, and whoever just believes in the righteousness of God will be saved from all sins. So although the Jews are said to be better than the Gentiles, they are cast away because they do not believe in the righteousness of God.

Just as the Gentiles cannot be saved from their sins by human morality or good deeds, so the Jews are not saved from sin by such things either. Therefore, neither Jews nor Gentiles can be saved from sin without believing in Jesus Christ, who became the righteousness of God, as God the Savior. God has given the very same righteousness of God to the Gentiles and to the Jews

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alike. Therefore, God cast away the Jews who had turned their backs on the righteousness of God and gave the Gentiles the same opportunity to believe in the righteousness of God.

Righteous by faith

The word the apostle Paul preached is as follows. God has now given many people the righteousness of God, that is, the gift of salvation from sin. The one thing that now remains for you is whether you believe that the baptism that Jesus Christ, who spoke the word of promise in the Old Testament and fulfilled the righteousness of God in the New Testament, received from John, and the blood of the Cross, were the gospel of the water and the Spirit that removed all your sins. Yet even though the spread of God's righteous gospel was clearly revealed in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the blood of the Cross, there are those who do not believe. Even so, God has bestowed on everyone who believes in the righteousness of God the grace of becoming a child of God. Even if many people do not believe in this blessing of God, the righteousness of God never disappears or is canceled.

Anyone at all can obtain the righteousness of God if he just hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which the righteousness of God is revealed, and believes it in his heart. But those who do not believe in the righteousness of God are making God a liar, and so they come to sin against God. In addition to that, whoever comes to stand on the side of the one who opposes God will be destroyed for that sin. God fulfilled all the righteousness of God in order to save sinners from their sins. But we must not think that the righteousness of God will be made

without effect for the one reason alone that people have not believed in it.

Therefore the apostle Paul says this. He says of the righteousness of God, *"Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not!" (Romans 3:3–4)*. God has given the gift of salvation that is the righteousness of God to all mankind. And He fulfilled that plan through the baptism His Son Jesus received from John and through His blood. This is precisely the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God has brought glory and honor to those who believe.

What is the greatest of all the gifts God has given to mankind? It is the righteousness of God. What is the righteousness of God? It is that God sent His Son to this earth, bought all people with the price of His own blood, set them free from all their sins, and made them children of God. God has given people the blessing of becoming children of God from before the foundation of the world.

Nevertheless, those who do not believe in the righteousness of God are shut up in sin. Do you think that the righteousness of God disappears just because someone does not believe in it? Absolutely not. The righteousness of God stands in its place forever. It is only that whoever does not believe will go to hell on the last day. The righteousness of God, by which God saved sinners, never disappears. Therefore, whoever accepts the righteousness of God receives the blessing of the remission of sins. For the word says, *"As it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged'" (Romans 3:4)*.

The Lord promised beforehand that He would give people the righteousness of God, and He fulfilled it according to that promise. Therefore, He gave blessing to those who were to be blessed, and He cursed those who were to be cursed. *"That You*

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may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged" (Romans 3:4). God, the Word having become flesh, came among us and saved us from sin. That is why Paul said, *"That You may be justified in Your words" (Romans 3:4)*.

The Lord ascended to heaven because He had fulfilled all the righteousness of God. We know that the Lord is faithful before Satan the devil, before all spiritual beings, and also before Himself. But man is not faithful. He changes even what he himself has said if it is to his disadvantage. Yet God has never once broken a promise He made to mankind. That is why we must set the foundation of our faith in the righteousness of God on the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which the righteousness of God is revealed.

Our unrighteousness

"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)" (Romans 3:5).

Let us look at the word of Romans chapter 3, verse 5. *"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" (Romans 3:5)*. This word is a word that shows how great the righteousness of God is. It is saying that man is false but the Lord is true.

Do you know the righteousness of God? I am asking whether you know that our wickedness makes the righteousness of God stand out all the more. God is truly faithful and righteous. God is the Lord of our salvation. God is the true God, who makes promises to us and fulfills them according to His word. Since man is evil from birth, he cannot help but do evil. But the point

is that such wickedness of man makes the righteousness of God stand out even more.

Then you may wonder what it means that the righteousness of God is revealed even more because of our evil. The fact is that because man sins until he dies, the Savior came to this earth, and the righteousness of God was revealed by His receiving baptism from John. We can clearly find this truth in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given us. Human beings are still sinning now, and they will go on sinning until they die. But our Lord performed the righteousness of God and removed the sin of mankind in this world once and for all. The righteousness of God does not save only those who do not sin and are good. Then whom does God save from sin? That He saved sinners who could not but go to hell from all their sins is the love that springs from the righteousness of God.

With that love, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John; He shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of that sin; and He rose again from death, and so He remitted all the sins of us who could not but go to hell.

When we look at the deeds of man, there is nothing in them that is lovely before God. But when man had sinned and could not but go to hell, God sent His only Son and saved man from the hand of the devil. *"If our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" (Romans 3:5)*. It is saying that the more unrighteous man is, the more the righteousness of God is revealed. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul speaks of.

Of course, this does not mean that you should live wickedly. It is saying that no matter how hard a person tries to live a good life, he cannot live a good life before God. A person born as a

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descendant of Adam is one who has no ability to live a good life even if he wants to. Therefore, man must believe in the righteousness of God. To do so, he must cast off human hypocrisy. Because a person who is not good strives to live a good life, he fails to accept the righteousness of God and falls into a wrong faith.

The only person who can live a good life before God is the person who has the righteousness of God. Before one came to know and believe in the righteousness of God, there was no one who lived a good life. Then how can one who cannot but sin be saved from all sins? This is where the righteousness of God is needed, and where the righteousness of God shines forth. Therefore, human beings must change their thinking of trying to build up their own goodness. The apostle Paul says that he himself, too, was saved from sin by believing in the righteousness of God.

But what do those who have not been born again say about this matter? People think that they must believe in Jesus and also live a good life in order to be saved from sin. That is why they cannot get out of their own sins. A person who has truly been saved from all his lifelong sins believes in the righteousness of God. So he always exalts and praises the righteousness of God. He boasts only of the righteousness of God and discards the righteousness of his own flesh.

Our being saved from sin comes by believing in the righteousness of God; it is not that we are saved by adding human righteousness to it. *"If our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" (Romans 3:5)*. Man's wickedness only proves, on the contrary, the righteousness and love of God. *"If the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may*

come'?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just" (Romans 3:7–8). It says that those who do not believe in the righteousness of God and oppose it with human thoughts are condemned and go to hell. It says that because they did not believe in the righteousness of God, their names are written in the book of judgment. The Lord tells us to repent and turn around and believe in the righteousness of God and be saved from sin.

The apostle Paul said, *"Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not!" (Romans 3:5–6).* It is saying that a person does not go to hell because he has sinned, but goes to hell because he does not believe in the truth in which the righteousness of God is revealed. Is God, who saves human beings from sin by the righteousness of God, wrong? No, He is not.

Those who do not know the righteousness of God

"For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" (Romans 3:7).

This word speaks from the fact that human beings sin instinctively because they were born with sin from birth. Paul says, "What if the righteousness of God is revealed even more because of such sinful human beings?" Paul is saying that if, in order to remove the sins that a person, born as a lump of sin, commits throughout his whole lifetime, God sent Jesus Christ to this earth and made Jesus Christ bear the sin of the world, which includes their sins, through the baptism He received from John, and Jesus Christ shed His blood on the Cross and remitted that sin, would that not have brought even more glory to God?

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People said regarding the apostle Paul, “Then it would be fine to have not a single good deed. If you say you have been saved from sin by faith, then since you have no sin from now on, you will sin even more, won’t you?” But we must know this. Man does not sin because he wants to sin. Man sins because he is one who cannot but sin. If a person is born a sinner, he sins throughout his whole life. Just as it is perfectly natural for an apple tree to bear apples, so it is perfectly natural for a sinner, having been born, to sin. The righteousness of our God saved us, whose outward show is always sin and whose fruit is always the fruit of sin, from the sin of the world. The Bible says that sinners who had no way to be saved apart from God were only saved from sin by believing in the righteousness of God, and that it was not that people sinned deliberately so as to make the grace of God abound.

Are those who slander in the right?

“And why not say, ‘Let us do evil that good may come’?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just” (Romans 3:8).

This word concerns what those who are deceived by liars mainly claim. Even now, those who believe in Jesus but are deceived by liars say things like this. The Book of Romans was written by the apostle Paul 2,000 years ago, but the people of this present age, too, retort just as the people of that time claimed: “If all sins have been removed through Jesus and have all been remitted, then whoever believes this will deliberately sin even more from now on!” These people are speaking by judging with their own fleshly thoughts. Whatever people may be like, Jesus has remitted all the sins of those people. Because of their own

thinking that if they keep on sinning they cannot be saved from sin, people are failing to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which the righteousness of God is revealed. Therefore, they are failing to enter into the truth of salvation from sin that God has given.

Whether a person has received the remission of sins or not, people go on sinning. But those sins have been cleanly removed by the righteousness of God. Therefore, a person is saved from sin by believing in the righteousness of God. Even after you have received the remission of sins, you cannot help but live sinning, because your flesh is still lacking. But the point is that there is a certain limit to the sins the righteous commit. Before a person receives the remission of sins, he sins even more because he does not know sin as sin even while sinning, but after the righteous have received the remission of sins, they know sin and so can no longer sin willfully.

Some people refuted the righteousness of God by saying to the apostle Paul, *"Why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?" (Romans 3:8)*, but Paul said, *"As we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just" (Romans 3:8)*. Since they do not believe in the righteousness of God, it is right that they are judged for their sins. Why? Because they do not abide in the faith that believes in the righteousness of God, but abide only in their own fleshly thoughts and their own hypocritical deeds, and are busy refuting the righteousness of God.

The apostle Paul said, "*What if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not!" (Romans 3:3–4)*. If a person does not believe in the righteousness of God, will that unbelief make the righteousness of God without effect? If one believes in the righteousness of God, one is saved from sin, and if one does not

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believe, one merely loses the grace of God's remission of sins; it is not that the righteousness of God disappears or loses its effect because one does not believe in it. The righteousness of God always stands firm in the universe.

The Lord's saving us from sin has nothing to do with human righteousness. However, there is a vast difference between those who believe in the righteousness of God and those who do not. Those who believe have been saved according to the truth, and those who do not believe go to hell because they have not been saved according to the truth of God. That is why God said that Jesus is a stumbling stone. No matter how wicked the sins a person has committed, if he believes in the righteousness of God, he becomes righteous and obtains eternal life; and no matter how good the deeds a person does, if he does not believe in the righteousness of God, he is judged according to the wages of his own sins and is destroyed. Jesus is a stumbling stone to those who follow human hypocrisy.

Can there be a righteous person who has sin? No. Then is there a righteous person who sins? Yes. Some people worry that although they believe in the righteousness of God, they cannot become righteous because they themselves will keep on sinning in the future. But we must know this. Our having believed in the righteousness of God and become righteous came by faith, not by good deeds. The righteousness of God means that Jesus has borne even all the sins we will commit in this world in the future, after we have believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have become righteous by believing that the Lord bore the sin of this world through the baptism He received from John in the Jordan River and died for us on the Cross. The Bible says that there is no one who is "a righteous person who does not sin." There are righteous people who sin, but there is no one who has believed in the righteousness of God and yet become a sinner. If

you have paid off all you owed on credit, are you still a debtor? The Lord's having removed all our sins is exactly the same as the principle that if a father, having a lot of money, has paid in advance to a certain store, in full and generously, everything his son will eat and use until he dies, then no matter how much that son takes from that store on credit, he does not become a debtor.

No one can become righteous by not sinning. Human flesh cannot be made perfect by not sinning. People sin continually because they must eat whenever they are hungry and because they have the five desires and seven emotions. This is the fate of man. We must discard the fleshly thought that after we believe in Jesus we become righteous by not sinning. There is no one who, as a human being, does not sin. But man is saved from sin by believing in the righteousness of God.

Those who have not yet been born again are following their own fleshly thoughts. We must remember that the Bible says, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6)*. As a human being, no one can make someone who keeps on sinning throughout his whole life sinless, but the righteousness of God has the power to make someone who sins all his life sinless.

The One who has perfectly washed away all the sins of man so that a person can say in his conscience that he is righteous is God. God has bestowed grace so that we, who sin, can say that we are righteous, and He has made it possible for us to call God Father. Faith has the power to set those who believe in the word of truth, in which the righteousness of God is written, free from the sin of the world. One cannot become righteous by the faith of one's own hypocrisy.

People who have not been born again are always shut up in their own thoughts. That is why sinners are never able to get out of their own thoughts. Even while saying that they believe in

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Jesus, they cannot possibly understand that the righteousness of God has completely saved those who believe in Jesus. If a person wants to be born again from sin, he must hear and believe the word of the righteousness of God through a person who has been born again. Because the Holy Spirit is in the born-again righteous, a sinner who hears the righteousness of God that the righteous preach can be born again. Please keep this in mind: that if you truly want to receive the blessing of being born again, you must meet a born-again person! A person can become sinless by believing in the righteousness of God revealed through Jesus Christ.

Though there was fundamentally no righteous person

"What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God" (Romans 3:9–11).

The meaning of these words is as follows. Originally, there was not a single righteous person in the world. So human beings always sinned. But the Bible says that sinners have become righteous by the righteousness of God, and it means that there is no one who understands this.

All mankind were sinners before God. But the point is that Jesus made them righteous by the righteousness of God. The words in the Bible, *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10),* speak of the state of people before they believed in the righteousness of God by which Jesus removed all the sin of this world. Since a person cannot become truly righteous

without believing in the righteousness of God, there is no true understanding either.

That is why the term "sanctification" appears in religion. But a person's becoming holy is not something that is obtained no matter how much he practices ascetic discipline and cultivates his character within the category of religion. Therefore, the point is that all mankind were all sinners before they came to know the righteousness of God.

"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). As natural men, people are sinners, but it is possible for them to become righteous if they believe in the righteousness of God. *"There is none who understands" (Romans 3:11)*. This means that there was no one who even realized that he himself was one who was going to hell. A sinner does not even realize that he is a sinner. If he does not realize that he is a sinner before God and is going to hell, he does not know how terrifying the judgment of God is either.

This word sums up the sinful state of all human beings. According to Paul, the Jews are no better than the Gentiles, and the Gentiles are no better than the Jews. Rather, he says that all are under sin, and that therefore all have become the objects of the wrath and final judgment of Almighty God. Quoting Psalm 14:1–3, Paul declares as follows.

"As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God" (Romans 3:10–11).

This is a correct judgment about man. It looks squarely at mankind, which is truly wretched. Mankind has no ability to do even one of these things: to please God, to understand Him, or to seek Him. Those who said that human beings are "totally depraved" from birth believed it in reliance on this word.

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The doctrine of total depravity, which says that man is a lump of sin from birth, is hard to accept for those who are building up human righteousness. It is said that this is because it tends to treat human dignity lightly. But isn't that the fact? Most people are willing to admit that they are not perfect. They are willing to admit that human beings are not perfect, but they are not ready to admit that there is no human righteousness. They are willing to admit that human beings have lost the righteousness of God and are wandering, having strayed from the true way, but most are those who do not admit that they have completely departed from the righteous way and are standing on the way of destruction. Those who pursue human righteousness only pretend to be seeking God, instead of admitting that they are fleeing from God.

A soul that refuses to acknowledge the righteousness of God and fights against it in order to assert human righteousness will hardly escape the punishment of hell. Such faith and such actions are extremely evil. That human beings do not try to know the righteousness of God, while not knowing exactly what the hypocritical righteousness of man is, is because they are held captive by their own ignorance. If a person does not know how proud he is before God, he has no way to know the righteousness of God, and he will not go to God either, as one goes to a doctor to receive the healing that is so desperately needed. The situation is somewhat like being sick and needing a doctor. As long as a person is convinced that his health is fine, he will not think of going to a hospital. But just as a person goes to a hospital when he realizes that he has a serious illness, so if a person knows that he spiritually has no righteousness of his own, he will turn to Jesus Christ, the great Physician, who alone can heal us from the sin of destruction.

There is none who understands

This word says that there is not a single person who realizes that he has sin and is going to hell. Occasionally there are some among people who do feel that the one who will go to hell is none other than themselves. But that realization is a knowing by feeling, not a knowing by believing in the truth that the wages of sin is death, which is the true law of God. Therefore, one can know the state of one's own soul only by looking at it through the word of God. One must realize that one's own soul, which has no righteousness of God, lives in vain and then goes to hell. When you truly have this kind of realization, you will seek the righteousness of God.

People have all turned aside and together become unprofitable. Dear fellow believers, the word "turned aside" means that, before God, a person has turned aside to human thoughts because he does not know the righteousness of God. The standard of true judgment concerning the truth lies only in the righteousness of God. Everything begins with the righteousness of God and ends with righteousness. For only God is righteous and has done righteous works for mankind.

Righteous judgment belongs to God alone. Righteous discernment is not in man. Yet people have all turned aside to their own thoughts. They are shut up in their own thoughts, saying things like, "This is what I think," or "This is what I think and this is what I believe." We see that human beings have all turned aside to their own thoughts and have no interest in the will of God. Those who do not discard their own thoughts in this way cannot discover the righteousness of God. That is why they do not seek God and do not return to the faith that believes in the word of God. For a person who has not been born again thinks that his own thoughts are the truth. But the truth of God exists

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only within the righteousness of God. The word of God is the canon, that is, the measuring rod. We must know that the word of the truth of God is the standard of all things.

Though man was fundamentally one to be cast away

"There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God" (Romans 3:11).

All people fundamentally rebel against God. Human beings merely pretend to be holy, pretend to be good, pretend to do good, and pretend to show mercy. But such behavior comes from trying to deceive themselves and God. For man's pretending to be good comes from rejecting God indirectly. There is only One who is good, and that is God alone. To pretend to have goodness in oneself without knowing the righteousness of God, even while believing in Jesus, is to challenge the righteousness of God and also to oppose the truth of God.

A person who does not believe in Jesus as the Savior is filled with the thought that he must live a good life in order to be saved from sin. Who taught that thought? Satan the devil taught it. Originally, man is one who cannot but live in hypocrisy. Human beings can live rightly only after receiving the remission of sins before God. That is why the word of God tells people that they must believe in the righteousness of God and receive the remission of sins. It also says that human beings were born in a state infected with sin. Because human beings cannot but go to hell on account of the sin they were infected with from birth and the wounds of sin, the Bible tells people to receive the remission of sins. Therefore, people must respond to the righteousness of

God. But if they cannot do so, being saved from sin through Jesus is impossible.

There is none who does good, no, not one

"They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12).

True goodness for human beings lies in believing in the righteousness of God. Goodness refers to the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God and human goodness are parallel lines that can never meet. That is why, among mankind born in sin, there is no one who does the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, God said that because people do not know and do not believe in the righteousness of God, there is not a single person who does the good that God desires.

Human beings departed from the right way from the beginning. Far from believing in the righteousness of God and worshiping Him with a thankful heart, they opposed the truth about Him and put created things in God's place and served them as if they were God. As a result, human intellect and ethics fell into chaos and gradually became corrupt. Therefore, human beings are not doing good. None among human beings does good. That is why a soul stained with sin and chaos could neither discover nor do the righteousness of God by itself. So human beings truly needed the righteousness of God.

Why does the righteousness of God tell us to believe in His righteousness? The answer is self-evident. It is so that we may see our own state of destruction and no longer make excuses or turn away from the danger of God's judgment, but quickly look to the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God—it is

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something absolutely necessary for mankind. The righteousness of God is greater than human righteousness. Therefore, we can discover the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. When we know the righteousness of God, we can believe in and do true righteousness.

Mankind facing destruction

"'Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit'; 'The poison of asps is under their lips'; 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.' 'Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.' 'There is no fear of God before their eyes'" (Romans 3:13–18).

"With their tongues they have practiced deceit" (Romans 3:13). People do not know that everything they say is a lie. People deceive one another well with their words. A person who belongs to Satan speaks from his own resources every time he lies. Satan the devil, every time he lies, speaks the lie as his own as if it were true. Therefore, everything that a person who has not been born again and serves Satan the devil as a slave says is all false. Some pastors who have not been born again say that if you give a lot of tithes, you will become rich. And then they go so far as to appoint the person who gives a lot of offerings as an elder. When that happens, people come to think that if they become elders they can obtain material wealth, and so there are those who strive with all their might to become elders. People believe that when they become elders God gives them a lot of material things, but in reality it is not so. Come to think of it, many people have been deceived by false pastors.

A lying minister appoints those who have money as elders. Why? To make them give even more money. It is written in the Bible that the saying that one receives material blessings upon becoming an elder is a lie. Rather than saying that becoming an elder brings material blessings, the Bible says that one will suffer even more persecution because of one's faith.

The law that brings about wrath

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19).

The law brings about wrath. And the law speaks to those who are under the law. God gave people the law and taught them that man is precisely one who cannot live according to the law of God. The point is that God gave the law to us, mankind. The reason God gave the law is not to make us keep the law. Then is it God's will to abolish the law? No, it is not.

Those who have departed from God come to know their own sins through the law and return to Jesus Christ. But the heart of a sinner who tries to be saved by keeping the law lives without knowing peace because of the law. First, a sinner is not at peace in his relationship with God. Rather, he is in a state of war with God. Second, he is not at peace with other people, so they curse and attack one another. Third, he cannot live at peace even with himself. Rather, he is constantly anxious and in anguish.

The only way for him to find peace is to believe in Jesus Christ, who gives the righteousness of God. By the righteousness of God, God removed the sin that stood between Him and people and built the bridge of reconciliation. Within the righteousness of God, sinners must strive to find peace with God.

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And they must have fellowship with one another within the righteousness of God, in which they can live peacefully.

What the wicked directly experience is suffering. In the way of the wicked there are misery and destruction. But those who do not know and do not believe in the righteousness of God instinctively strive to destroy and ruin one another. True peace arises within the faith that knows and believes in the righteousness of God.

There is no fear of God

"There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18).

Romans 3:18 says that as a result of mankind's not believing in the word of God, their hearts have been cut off from God because of sin and their lives have come to ruin. They *"became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (Romans 1:22–23)*. The fact that there is no fear of God in the heart of a sinner is evidence that he has become an atheist. The text points this out and shows it.

But the reason Paul specifically mentioned the parts of the human body here is that people sin with these things. Before God, the human throat is an open tomb. That is to say, it means that human beings do nothing but eat for themselves and then die. The human tongue is an instrument that practices deceit. On human lips is the poison of asps. The human mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Human feet are swift to shed blood. Because of their own sins, destruction and misery are in the ways of human beings, they have not known the way of peace, and there is no fear of God before their eyes.

But one more thing I want to add is that if a person is not relying on the righteousness of God, he cannot but receive cursing and destruction before God. In fact, not fearing the Almighty means that one is fully prepared to receive the wrath of God. Not accepting the righteousness of God is the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, which cannot be remitted, and God will surely bring down the just punishment for that sin.

But human beings, even while they are in sin, do not fear God, who is the one and only, who is holy and who executes judgment. Rather, they fear beings lesser than God. That is because of human sin. What a contradiction this is! For they fear visible created things, which will all pass away, yet they do not fear God, before whom we must all one day stand and give account. It is no wonder that the psalmist said, *"Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, Who walks in His ways" (Psalm 128:1)*.

As Paul says, mankind is in a state of destruction because of sin, so can the problem of sin be solved by anything other than faith in the righteousness of God? Absolutely not. Is mankind really in a state of destruction? Yes, it is! But mankind can be saved from all sins by virtue of the glorious righteousness of God that is in Jesus Christ, the Savior, who is God.

Being placed under judgment

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19).

The Bible speaks to people the latter half of Galatians 2:16. *"Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for*

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by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Galatians 2:16). The Bible has proven that no one can satisfy the perfect standards of God by the stained righteousness of man.

You must understand this clearly. In the righteous court of God, no one, however great a person he may be, can receive the verdict of being righteous by relying on his own good deeds. Your sins will condemn you. The only way for anyone to be saved from sin is to believe in Jesus Christ, who bore all the sins corresponding to our evil deeds by receiving baptism from John, received the punishment for sin in His own body, and gave us the righteousness of God as a gift. By shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, Jesus received the judgment for those sins in our place, and by rising again from death, He remitted all our sins.

In light of what we have said so far, the only answer to the question "With what qualification are you trying to enter the kingdom of heaven?" is to find the way that leads to the truth of knowing the righteousness of God. One day, you and I will die. On that day we will see God, and we will hear Him say, "With what qualification are you trying to enter the kingdom of heaven?" What answer will you give?

Perhaps you will say this: "Here is the word of faith that believes in the righteousness of God. I, too, know that I have done some bad things. But I have faith that believes in the baptism that Jesus Christ, who became the righteousness of God, received from John, and in His blood. I hope that the Lord will look at this faith and, by it, see that I am fully qualified to enter the kingdom of heaven. All I ask of You is that my faith be acknowledged." If you say this, you will be acquitted on account of the righteousness of God. No matter how good the deeds you have done in your life may look in your eyes or even in the eyes

of others, they will not save you. You will only say that you have been saved by faith in the righteousness of God.

There is no one who will be acknowledged as righteous before God by the deeds of the law. For by the law one comes to know sin (Romans 3:20). I hope that you will not put forward your own good deeds but will instead put forward before God your faith in the righteousness of God. At the very least, human goodness is not fit before God. You will know that you have no righteousness of your own. That is why this fact becomes the opportunity and the evidence for presenting before God your faith in the righteousness of God. If you do not have faith in the righteousness of God before the judgment seat of God, that situation will be agony. For before the great Judge, the only One in the universe, you cannot appeal, there is no possibility at all of asking for leniency, and there is no hope at all of escaping condemnation.

What will you say at that time? I believe that you will experience the importance of the righteousness of God and feel thankful. If you have not yet reached the level of faith at which you can present your faith in the righteousness of God, I want you to quickly learn now what kind of righteousness the righteousness of God is. Our qualification to enter the kingdom of heaven is the righteousness of God that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us. He received baptism from John for us, and He received the punishment on the Cross in our place. He is the One who has given us the righteousness of God by which we enter the kingdom of heaven. The Lord's righteousness has become our righteousness.

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No flesh will be justified by works

"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20).

The apostle Paul was speaking rightly about the law. Dear fellow believers, can we become righteous by keeping the law? We cannot become righteous by the law. Can a person be sanctified and enter the kingdom of God? No, he cannot. Those who have not been born again all come to be under the law of God. For when they come to believe in God, they think that they must keep the law in order to become righteous. Because of this, they offer prayers of repentance every day and keep challenging themselves to become righteous by keeping the law. This is a wrong practice that came from getting the very first step wrong. The law only teaches that all people are sinners, so trying to keep the law by misunderstanding the law of God is a shame that comes from ignorance of the truth and a confused thought that comes from human religion. It is because they wrongly understand the function of the law. Can a person be sanctified and enter the kingdom of God? No, he cannot.

The doctrine of sanctification exists in all the religions of the world. Buddhism has the doctrine of attaining Buddhahood. Christianity has the doctrine of sanctification. But this doctrine did not come from the truth but from the thoughts of the human flesh. Therefore, it can be called devilish. Did Jesus tell us that after we believe in Jesus we become sanctified little by little and later enter the kingdom of heaven? No. The righteousness of our Lord made us holy once and for all and enabled us to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, a person who does not have the Holy Spirit is not righteous. No matter how much a sinner believes in Jesus and lives a good life and strives to

become sanctified, a sinner is only a sinner. Even if a person cleans the outside, there is sin inside, so sin still defiles both the inside and the outside. This is what a sinner looks like.

But a person who has received the remission of all these sins is the exact opposite. For although human beings cannot but live wickedly, he comes to live more cleanly. A person born infected with sin can do nothing but spread sin throughout his whole life. For since he has already been infected with sin, sin keeps coming out from within him against his will. If one truly does not want to be a person who spreads sin, the only way is to receive the injection that removes the germ of sin. But a person who has believed in the righteousness of God bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is within him.

The second reason there is not a single person who will be acknowledged as righteous before God by keeping the law is that no one actually keeps the law. Anyone who kept the law thoroughly would be acknowledged as righteous before God, but in reality no one can keep the law of God; rather, everyone is breaking the law of God. Man cannot keep even the lightest provision of the law, so how could he keep the whole law! ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

If our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?

< Romans 3:1–8 >

“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.’ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say, ‘Let us do evil that good may come’?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.”

What profit was there even if they believed?

What advantage does the Jew have over the Gentile? The Jews are those who received the word of God and were entrusted

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with it. God called Abraham and promised to give him descendants, and to those descendants He said that He would give them the sacrificial system through the law and send the Savior.

There is almost nothing in which the Jews are better than the Gentiles, apart from the fact that they have Abraham, the father of faith. They were those who were entrusted with the word of God, and they were also those who feared God.

Now, if we look at the word from Romans 2:17 onward, Paul is dealing with the question of what advantage the Jew has. What the Jews had over the Gentiles was precisely that they had received circumcision. Circumcision is what God gave to Abraham and his descendants as the sign of the covenant that He would be their God.

Physically, it is cutting off the foreskin of a male, but spiritually it means cutting off a person's sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and being saved from sin. But the Jews did not receive this spiritual circumcision; they were merely the descendants of Abraham who had received only the circumcision of the flesh.

So, to the question, "What advantage did the Jew have?" the conclusion comes out that if they did not believe in Jesus spiritually and were not saved from sin by the water and the Spirit, they were no better than the Gentiles.

This applies just as it is to the religious people who follow Christianity today. Merely believing in the religion called Christianity makes one no better at all than the people of other religions.

If, while claiming to believe in Christianity, people do not actually believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given, that is, in the baptism Jesus received from John

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and the blood of the Cross, such people are never any better than those who believe in pagan religions.

True Christian faith is believing in Jesus personally, and it starts from believing in the baptism He received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross.

Today, countless religions exist in this world. There are Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam, and even within Christianity there are various denominations and traditions. Among them, the religions that are large worldwide include Islam, Catholicism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

But what is more important than which religion one believes in is whether one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that is, in the true salvation given through that gospel. This alone is the only way that saves a person from sin and enables him to be justified before God. Among the religions, no religion has the power to remit a person's sins.

Acts 4:12 says, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).*

Apart from Jesus Christ, there exists no name that can give the remission of sins and salvation.

People who believe in Buddhism also feel sin in their hearts. Those who say they believe in Jesus, too, in many cases live with sin in their hearts. If so, what can be said to be better between the one who believes in Buddhism and the one who believes in Jesus?

When a person who believes in Buddhism sins, he chants "Namo Amitabha" (Hail Amitabha Buddha) or "Avalokitesvara" (the Bodhisattva of Compassion), gives many offerings to the temple, and tries to obtain comfort for his heart.

Among those who say they believe in Jesus, too, there are many who come to church, give a lot of offerings, and do a lot of service, and take comfort in it themselves.

In this way, religious acts done in a state of not having been born again by the truth are merely religious acts to soothe one's own heart. That is why such a person, even if he is a Christian, is no better than a person of another religion, and in the end there is no profit in believing in Jesus.

The Bible clearly says as follows.

"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

Therefore, if one claims to believe in Jesus and yet does not know the truth of being born again of water and the Spirit, in the end one does not obtain the profit of salvation.

Even if one is a Christian outwardly, in reality one does not enter the kingdom of God.

In fact, the message the apostle Paul is giving through this word is a tremendous challenge to the Christian believers of today.

It is a word that makes us look back at ourselves and ask what true faith is, whether we have really been set free from sin, and whether we have been born again of water and the Spirit.

We must all return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Even the people who are in the church today must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and return before God.

Many Christians are striving to lead people to church. But the problem is that, after preaching the gospel to them, they are failing to properly teach the righteousness of God, that is, the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit that accomplishes the remission of sins.

The reason is simple. Because they themselves do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they cannot teach it either.

Even if one is a Christian believer, one must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God the Father has given through Jesus Christ and receive the remission of all sins. Only then does one obtain the righteousness of God in one's heart and can truly return to God.

The word of the Book of Romans is not merely a warning directed at the Jews. It is a word directed at all the people of today who have not been able to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have not been born again. Now they, too, must return to the true gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If one is a Christian, one must look back at oneself.

"Am I truly believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Or am I holding on to a wrong faith?"

If one has a wrong faith, one must now return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the truth.

God has spoken as follows.

"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 11:9). Just as this word says, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is now being spread abundantly throughout the whole world. Now no one can make the excuse any longer that he does not know this gospel. But what about the Christianity of today?

Formal faith remains, such as holding weddings in the Christian style, conducting funerals with Christian rites, and holding memorial services after death. But when it comes to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is what really matters, in most cases people know absolutely nothing about it.

So I say to you clearly: We must all return without fail to the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But this gospel is not something one can hear from just anyone.

This gospel of the water and the Spirit can be preached only through those who truly know and believe in the righteousness of God. This is precisely the treasure of the remission of sins that was within the plan of God of which the Bible speaks. Some people reject this gospel even after hearing it. But since we were able to hear and believe in this gospel, we cannot help but give sincere thanks before God.

For a long time I deeply wondered why Jesus received baptism, and I kept asking myself the question. No matter how much I asked people who were said to be well versed in the Bible and to know a lot, there was not a single person who knew the reason exactly.

But God Himself made me realize that truth. The answer was right there in Matthew 3:15. The baptism Jesus received from John was the righteousness of God that He accomplished by bearing all sins.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore all the sin of mankind on His own body, and through this He accomplished the righteousness of God. Through that righteousness of God I came to meet the Lord, and my sins, too, were completely remitted.

And from then until now, God has established me as one who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By the grace of God, I have always preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit without leaving it out even once.

In the Church of God, this gospel must always be proclaimed abundantly. For if it is not, our faith gradually dies, our souls lose life, and in the end we lose faith and are separated from God forever.

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In the born-again church, this gospel of the water and the Spirit must be testified of in every department and community—the Sunday school, the middle and high school group, the young adults, the adults, the women's fellowship, and so on—and through this each person's faith must be made full.

Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which contains the righteousness of God, receives the remission of sins. He is one who has obtained the righteousness of God and has already been set free from all sins.

Therefore, he now comes to live according to the righteousness of God that he has already obtained by faith.

He who believes in the righteousness of God receives the spiritual blessings of heaven.

This is precisely the gospel of salvation that God has given us, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it is the only word of life that we must preach.

What happens if we do not believe in the righteousness of God?

Romans 3:3 says as follows. *"What if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?" (Romans 3:3)*. This word is the question of whether, just because people do not believe in the righteousness of God, the righteousness of God is nullified or made without effect. But it is not so.

Even if we do not believe in the righteousness of God, the righteousness of God never disappears. God is One who never makes His own righteousness without effect under any circumstances.

The righteousness of God is contained in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and through this gospel God has saved us from all sins forever. Those who believe have been saved from all sins by faith through that gospel.

But just because people do not believe in this righteousness of God, it is not that God suffers some loss. Rather, that loss falls only on the unbelievers themselves.

The righteousness of God is not shaken or swayed by the unbelief of man. God is true, and the righteousness of God, by which He has removed our sins, remains valid without change.

The gospel of the remission of sins, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross, never changes.

Here, the word "faithfulness" means 'being true.'

In other words, it means that the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has bestowed on us is true, and the grace of the remission of sins contained in it never changes.

The righteousness of God that gives the remission of sins exists forever together with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then, has God truly saved us from the sin of the world by the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Yes, He has.

The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it is still being testified of now. In this gospel is contained the truth by which all mankind in the whole world is saved from sin. Then let me ask again. What is the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

In order to save the sinners of this earth from all sins, God sent His Son Jesus Christ. When Jesus turned thirty, He went to find John the Baptist, who was at the Jordan River.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River, Jesus bore all the sin of mankind on His own body. Matthew 3:15 says as follows.

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"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).

It was precisely through that baptism He received from John that Jesus accomplished the righteousness of God and bore the sin of the world. And after that, Jesus, who had borne that sin, was crucified, and with the blood He shed He completed the judgment for our sins.

This is precisely the righteousness of God.

This gospel of the water and the Spirit is still valid now, and whoever believes in this gospel is set free from all sins. The baptism and the blood of the Cross that God carried out are the work of salvation by which He washed away the sins of all sinners.

What is it that Jesus came to this earth and truly did? It is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is not a mere religious doctrine, nor is it imagination or fiction; it is the work of salvation that God actually carried out in order to save sinners from sin.

The Bible says as follows: *"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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16–17).*

The reason God the Father sent His only Son Jesus Christ to this earth was precisely to save all of us who live in this world from our enormous sins. God did not express His love merely with the words "I love you."

In order to actually show that love, God sent Jesus, His Son in whom He is well pleased, and had all the sins of the world transferred onto His body. That method was precisely the baptism Jesus received from John.

In order to remove the sin of the world, Jesus received baptism directly from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Through that baptism the sin of mankind was passed on to Jesus, and Jesus, who had borne that sin, paid the price of sin by dying on the Cross.

And Jesus completed our salvation by overcoming death and rising again. This is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this gospel is the true salvation of God, who removed the sin of the whole world.

Jesus came to this earth as the Son of God, received baptism from John the Baptist, had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, so that if only we believe that fact, all our sins are remitted. All this work by which God saved us is an act of true love, and it is a sure salvation by which He delivered us from all sins with the actual baptism and blood.

The love of God was not a love spoken only in words but an event of redemption that actually took place in history. And true love is never nullified. Therefore, he who believes in Jesus is saved from sin, but he who does not believe is still in sin and receives punishment as the penalty for that sin.

The baptism and the blood of the Cross that God bestowed on us out of His love for us do not disappear just because we do not believe. What God has spoken to us and the grace of the remission of sins that He has given us are valid forever.

Even if everything in this world disappears, the righteousness of God that He has done for us, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that remits sins, never disappears. Then let us now think about the profit of faith.

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Is it profitable to believe, or is it profitable not to believe?

The first thing to think about is whether, when God saved us from sin, He did it one-sidedly without even asking us, or whether, because He loved us so much, Jesus Himself bore all our sins, the sins of the world.

Will you not believe that God has saved us from the sin of the world with His one-sided love and the righteousness of God?

Because God loved us, He removed all our sins through Jesus' receiving baptism from John and shedding His blood on the Cross.

If one does not believe in this love and righteousness of God, it only ends up being a loss to oneself. On the other hand, he who believes in the blessed word that Jesus removed the sin of the world with the righteousness of God that He accomplished receives the eternal remission of sins and enjoys eternal life.

Has God passed on even the sins of those who committed atrocious sins entirely to Jesus through the baptism He received from John? Yes, He has.

Jesus bore all the lifelong sins of every person in this world, without any distinction, whether an ordinary person living a common life, one who committed a great fraud, or a prisoner who committed a serious crime.

With the baptism He received from John and the precious blood He shed on the Cross, Jesus remitted all those sins.

Therefore, the person who believes in this "gospel of the water and the Spirit" receives the remission of sins and enjoys its profit, but the person who does not cannot but be excluded from that blessing.

Can the faith of false people make the faithfulness of God without effect? It cannot. God has already removed all the sins

of all people with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But those who have a false faith are unwilling to believe in the truth of the remission of sins accomplished by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Even if they do not believe in this truth, the righteousness of God never disappears.

Among them there are also those who believe that they receive the remission of sins by the blood of the Cross alone. But by the blood of the Cross alone, one cannot obtain complete salvation from all one's sins.

When Jesus came to this earth, He did not only shed His blood on the Cross.

When the Lord turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist and bore all the sins of the world on His own body, and after that He was crucified, died, and rose again.

If Jesus had not borne sins through the baptism He received from John, what would His shedding blood and dying on the Cross have to do with us? It could not be so. If Jesus had died on the Cross without bearing our sins through His baptism, that death would have become something that had nothing to do with us.

Therefore, it was only after receiving baptism from John that Jesus was able to go to the Cross. Because Jesus received baptism from John, He was able to die on the Cross, and by doing so He completed the redemption for us.

Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John. His receiving baptism and His dying on the Cross are the work of grace whose effect of salvation reaches those who believe in that truth.

The word of Isaiah chapter 53 testifies of this even more clearly. "*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was*

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

The reason Jesus was bruised on the Cross is that He had already borne our sins through the baptism He received from John. If He had not borne sins through His baptism, He could never have been bruised on the Cross. He was struck because of our transgressions, and the reason He was hung on the Cross lies precisely in His having borne sins through His baptism.

Even so, why do people not believe in the baptism Jesus received from John together with the blood of the Cross? Why do they not accept this gospel of the water and the Spirit? The reason is that people do not know how great and profound a work of blessing it is that Jesus received baptism from John. So they are living without properly knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, holding an incomplete faith.

Therefore, we come to receive help from God in every respect, in spirit and in body, and in Him our lives are changed anew. Everything of the past that we have piled up while living until now is buried in God, and we have now been born again as new creations. We must believe the fact that God fills us with new blessings, as new workers and as new children of God.

Now you and I must live by faith, by believing in the word of our God, united wholeheartedly in the work the church does. Even if right now the work we do seems not to be going well, because God has said, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33)*, we must go forward seeking first the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God.

If we do so, things are bound to go well. For God has promised so by His word.

Therefore, you and I must live like that. A life of believing in the word of God, being united by faith, and seeking the righteousness of God—that is precisely the way of a true

believer. Once we come to know only the final result, we later naturally become curious about the concrete process by which that result was reached. And at that time, only the one who can explain that process in detail can be said to be the one who truly and rightly knows that result.

It is the same with the righteousness of God. In order to preach this righteousness of God, one must have a faith that believes concretely in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Bible clearly says that only when a person is born again of water and the Spirit can he enter the kingdom of God and see the kingdom of God.

Therefore, just believing in the blood of the Cross alone does not mean that one can immediately enter the kingdom of God or see the kingdom of God.

A faith that believes only in the blood of Jesus' Cross is like knowing only half of the truth. The Bible emphasizes it repeatedly. The core of the whole Bible is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and at the same time it is the testimony of the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ received baptism from John and then atoned for our sins by dying on the Cross. This is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit that gives the true remission of sins of which the Bible speaks.

Therefore, Christian believers must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit without fail. It is not for any other reason, but because if one does not believe in that gospel, one cannot but go to hell.

But sadly, many Christians even today do not believe in the baptism Jesus received from John. Yet just because they do not believe, the righteousness of God does not disappear.

The righteousness of God is a truth that only the one who believes comes to discover, and that righteousness always exists

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without change. We may say that we believe in Jesus, but if we do not believe why He received baptism and how that baptism is connected to His death on the Cross, in the end we walk the path of bearing the price of our own sins by ourselves, like Judas Iscariot.

But conversely, he who truly believes in the meaning of the baptism Jesus received from John and in the result of His death on the Cross is delivered from all sins and saved.

Whether we believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts or not, that fact does not change.

For this gospel is a work that God planned one-sidedly and accomplished Himself. Therefore, we must believe. The righteousness of God that God the Father accomplished through His only begotten Son is the eternal truth, and that righteousness is the perfect gospel of the water and the Spirit for saving us from sin.

That righteousness of God exists yesterday, today, tomorrow, and forever, and only he who believes in that righteousness receives the remission of sins and reaches the kingdom of heaven. Peter and Judas were people who had sinned alike before God.

But between them there was a clear difference of faith. Peter denied Jesus three times and even cursed. Nevertheless, he knew who his Savior was, and in the end he repented and was saved by believing in Jesus, who had remitted his sins. But Judas was different. After selling Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, he was pricked in his conscience and tormented.

But he did not take that sin to Jesus; he tried to resolve it by himself. As a result, saying he would take responsibility for his own sin, he hanged himself and died. Here we can clearly see the difference between “true repentance” and “false repentance.” True repentance is, like Peter, receiving the remission of sins by

believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has given, no matter how atrocious the sins one has committed, and becoming a child of God.

Conversely, false repentance is, like Judas, trying to resolve one's own sins by one's own strength and ending up reaching destruction. Therefore, we must return into the faithfulness of God. That way is precisely the way of faith. God truly loved us who had fallen into sin, and He saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must return into the faith that believes in that gospel. Believing in this gospel that Jesus has truly saved us from sin, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit—this is true repentance and true faith.

Whoever does not believe in this gospel cannot but go to hell in the end. But God did not want anyone to go to hell. He is patiently waiting for everyone to enter the kingdom of heaven by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Therefore, dear beloved fellow believers, do not keep God waiting too long. Return to the Lord by faith right now.

Every man is a liar, but God is true

This is the word of Romans 3:4. *"Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged'" (Romans 3:4)*.

What is the reason the word says *"let God be true but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4)*? The reason is precisely that the Lord came to this earth just as He had said to us and saved us from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This work of salvation that God accomplished is perfect and true, and therefore we must acknowledge the falseness of man and confess

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that God alone is true.

Man is false and evil at any time. Within his nature lie falsehood and unrighteousness, and his heart both deceives and is deceived. But God is always true, and His word is unchanging.

Where is that truthfulness of God revealed? It is revealed precisely in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This gospel is the word that God directly spoke to mankind, promised, and accomplished Himself.

By believing in this word, we are delivered from falsehood and iniquity. Only the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the power that overcomes the falseness and unrighteousness of man and saves us from all sins.

Then how does God judge man? God looks at a person's heart. He looks at whether there is sin in that heart or not, and whether the person has the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In the end, the judgment of God is divided according to whether that person believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit or not.

If we have the faith that knows and believes in the word of God, that faith brings us to the kingdom of heaven when we stand before God. But he who did not believe in that word is judged and punished according to the word of the Bible. In conclusion, the only way God enables us to overcome sin and falsehood is through the faith that believes in His word.

This word is a quotation from David's prayer of repentance in Psalm 51. In that prayer David confesses as follows: "If You, in Your word, say that one is righteous, he is righteous, and if You say that one is righteous when You judge, that is righteousness. If You say there is sin, there is sin."

This prayer is the confession of repentance David offered after committing adultery and, furthermore, indirectly killing the

husband of the woman with whom he had committed adultery. He did not make excuses for his sin. Instead, he fell down as he was before the word of God and confessed, "The word is right, and I am a sinner."

That is why David received the remission of sins from God and could become a man after God's own heart. If a person looks at a woman and harbors lust, commits adultery, and even goes so far as to kill a person, he has broken all the law of God.

David was like that, too. He had a prophet named Nathan. One day Nathan tells David the following story: "There was a poor man. He had only one little ewe lamb, and that lamb was as precious to him as his family. Then one day, a guest came to a rich man who owned many sheep. That rich man did not slaughter one of his own many sheep, but instead took away the poor man's one and only little lamb and served his guest with it."

Hearing this story, David became greatly angry and said, "Is there such a wretched man? Such a man must be punished at once. Who is he? He deserves to be cursed by God!"

Then the prophet Nathan said quietly as follows.

"That man is you."

At that moment, David could no longer say anything.

And he immediately confessed his sin before God and confessed as follows: "If in Your judgment You say it is righteous, it is righteous, and if in Your judgment You say I am unrighteous, I am an unrighteous man. Not my thoughts or my judgment, but only Your judgment, Lord, is right. If You, Lord, say I am a sinner, I am a sinner, and if You, Lord, say You have remitted my sins, I have received the remission of sins. I entrust my all entirely to the judgment and the remission of sins of God."

This is precisely the attitude of true faith before God. It is the same with us who believe in Jesus. Whatever situation we are in, how that matter is judged depends solely on God. If God says,

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"It is all right," it is all right, and if God says, "No," then no matter how much we insist that it is all right, it is not right.

Our judgment is not the standard; God's judgment is the final standard. Therefore, we must always entrust ourselves to God's judgment and stand humbly before the word.

The Bible says as follows. *"That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged" (Romans 3:4)*. This means that God is surely justified according to His own word and that He overcomes even in that place of judgment.

God promised to send us the Savior, and according to that promise He sent Jesus Christ to this earth. In order to atone for our sins, Jesus received baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and by rising again from death accomplished perfect salvation for us.

All this the Lord accomplished according to the word He had spoken to us beforehand. He came as He had promised, He did as He had promised, and He accomplished salvation as He had promised.

Therefore, His judgment, too, is carried out according to that word. That is, if one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that gives the remission of sins, of which He spoke, one is saved; but if one does not believe, one is cursed and reaches hell, just as He said.

The way God overcomes His enemies is not by coercion or force. He overcomes by the truthfulness of the word of promise that He Himself gave. The true word of God overcomes falsehood, and His truth becomes the power that overcomes all the unrighteousness and darkness of the world.

God has never once spoken a lie, nor has He ever done the least evil; He is the God of perfect goodness.

His goodness is without blemish, and His word is the perfect truth without a single error. That is why God has fulfilled His

promise to save all the people of this earth from sin with "the gospel of the water and the Spirit."

This is precisely the righteousness of God, and the evidence that God is true. Many people say they believe in Jesus, but because they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they come to stand before God still with sin in their hearts.

At that time God will try them before the judgment seat and pronounce the verdict. They will say, "Lord, I believed in Jesus. So why are You sending me to hell? Must I go to hell just because I have a little sin?" Then the Lord will say as follows.

"Did I not promise to remove your sins? According to that promise, did I not come to this earth, receive baptism from John in your place, and shed My blood on the Cross to bear your sins? Then why does sin still remain in your heart?"

The remission of sins is received by faith. The one who believes can say, "There is no sin in my heart," but the one who does not believe is judged according to the law and punished. God does everything according to His word, and according to that word He gives salvation to those who believe and punishment to those who do not believe.

Therefore, we must not think that we go to the kingdom of heaven merely by saying, "I believe in Jesus." What matters is whether that person knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and whether he believes in that gospel.

This word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the core truth of God's salvation that appears wherever we open the whole Bible, the Old and New Testaments. He who believes in the righteousness of God can boldly confess his faith before God, and by that faith he enters the kingdom of heaven.

Our human righteousness, no matter how hard we try, is filthy and lacking. But God has made us new with His own righteousness and clothed us with the garment of the

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righteousness of God that He prepared for us. Only he who has put on that garment of righteousness can stand before God and enter the kingdom of heaven.

What faith we should have as we come before God is very important. We must come not merely with emotions or experiences, but with the faith that believes in the word of the righteousness of God. With experiences of having seen visions, performed miracles, and experienced power, one cannot stand before God.

What matters is which word we have come to know and how, and how we have believed and received the remission of sins. We must find the righteousness of God in the gospel of the water and the Spirit without fail and believe in it.

Only by the faith that believes in the word of the righteousness of God can we stand before God, be approved by God, and enter the kingdom of heaven abundantly. Even if we do wrong and have shortcomings on this earth, there is only one way to escape from that condemnation and from the accusations of Satan the devil, and it lies in the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We can boldly cry out.

"Satan, be gone!"

"The Lord received baptism from John at the Jordan River for me, and He shed His blood on the Cross. When Jesus Christ received baptism, all righteousness was fulfilled, just as the word says, *'thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness'" (Matthew 3:15)*!

"Jesus received baptism from John in order to bear all my sins, and in that baptism all my sins, too, were passed on to Jesus. The baptism of Jesus is the baptism for bearing my sins, the death of Jesus is the death He died in my place, the shedding of Jesus' blood is the blood for me, and the resurrection of Jesus is

the resurrection for giving me new life. I believe all of this!" He who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit can boldly command Satan the devil.

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command you, Satan, be gone!"

The reason we can proclaim like this is that the true faith of the remission of sins is within us. Satan sees that faith and retreats. It is so even now.

That you and I keep the faith to the end is not because our will is strong or because our memory is good. It is solely because of the faith that believes in the word of the righteousness of God that we cannot deny God. Because the word of God is in our hearts, and because we have the faith that believes in that word, we can at any time overcome Satan, overcome ourselves, and stand before God.

We must never forget this fact. The one who does not believe is already in a state of having reserved a place in hell. But the one who believes is one who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift, who has become a child of God and possesses the eternal life of the kingdom of heaven.

For the righteous, the Holy Spirit works clearly and actually. This truth is unchanging even now, and it is alive and working within our faith.

Do the sins we commit demonstrate the righteousness of God?

Let us look at the word of Romans 3:5. *"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)" (Romans 3:5).*

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Here, a question is asked. Do all the sins we commit demonstrate the righteousness of God? Yes, they do. How lacking a being man is! From the time he is born from his mother's womb until he enters the grave, man commits sins without ceasing. As for how many sins he commits, their number is greater than the grains of sand on the seashore, and their weight is heavier than the dark clouds of the sky. Though he commits countless sins like this, it is precisely this that reveals even more distinctly how great the righteousness of God, that is, the love and mercy of God, is.

The greater our lack and weakness, the greater and clearer the righteousness of God appears in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, the grace of salvation by which God saved us is revealed even more greatly in the midst of our sinfulness and helplessness.

Then, is it wrong for God to judge sinners? Certainly not. For it is just and righteous for God to judge those who do not believe and to inflict wrath on them. On the other hand, for those who believe in the righteousness of God, the righteousness of God comes upon that faith. As a result, God makes them His own people, embraces them in His bosom, and lets them enjoy eternal riches and glory.

In order to remit all the sins a person has committed throughout his whole life, God has bestowed a great grace that cannot be fully expressed in words. Yet if one does not believe in that grace, it is not wrong in the least for God to bring the judgment for those sins.

The Bible asks, *"Is God unjust who inflicts wrath?" (Romans 3:5)*. This is asking whether God commits sin. Certainly not. It is entirely natural for God to inflict wrath on those who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which contains the righteousness of God.

There are those who, while saying they believe in Jesus, still live harboring sin in their hearts. And when they come to go to hell, can they protest to God? They cannot. For God has already sent His only Son Jesus Christ to this earth, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism Jesus received from John, had Him die on the Cross, and raised Him again. This was an act that revealed the perfect love and righteousness of God.

No matter how great a sin a person has committed, if only he does not reject the gospel of the water and the Spirit but believes in that word, any sin can be remitted. But although Jesus has already borne all the sins of the world, including that person's sins, going to hell by not believing in the righteousness of God is solely that person's choice, and not God's fault.

Accordingly, it is also natural for God to inflict wrath on him, and God is never unjust.

The difference between the one who believes in the righteousness of God and the one who does not

In this age, whether a person says he believes in Jesus or says he does not, whether he has believed in the righteousness of God or not is clearly revealed by whether there is sin in his heart or not.

Is it really proper for God to inflict wrath on the souls of those who are sent to hell? Yes, it is proper. For the greatest sin before God is to reject that great love of God, who sent His only Son Jesus Christ to this earth, had Him bear all the sin of mankind through the baptism that the Son received from John, and had Him die on the Cross.

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The greatest sin before God is precisely not receiving into one's heart that love which contains the righteousness of God, and not acknowledging and not believing in the truth of the remission of sins that He accomplished through Jesus Christ. This indeed is the heaviest and gravest sin before God.

Therefore, in the end, those who go to hell go to hell not because they have committed many sins, but because they have not believed in the righteousness of God. That sin of not believing in the righteousness of God is exceedingly great, and it is a sin that cannot escape the wrath of God.

Then, can even a person who says he believes in Jesus go to hell? Of course. The person who does not believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and His death on the Cross, and who puts his own righteousness first, cannot but go to hell in the end. The reason there is sin in the heart even while saying one believes in Jesus is that one does not believe in the righteousness of God but rather establishes one's own righteousness.

The person who puts forward his own righteousness keeps trying to offer something before God and tries to be approved by his own goodness and effort. Such a person cannot but have sin in his heart, and because of that sin he ends up being unable to stand before God.

On the other hand, the person who believes in the righteousness of God and gives thanks for that salvation, being moved by the grace he has received, hopes that other souls, too, will be saved from sin and carries out the work of God with joy. God is pleased with and accepts such sacrifice and devotion.

But the one who tries to put forward his own good deeds before God, God never accepts. Rather, He turns away from him and casts him out. For God is pleased only with the one who believes in the righteousness of God.

This is the word of verses 6 and 7. *"Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" (Romans 3:6–7).*

Does one's own lack demonstrate the righteousness of God even more?

The apostle Paul is now speaking with the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What is the key point Paul is emphasizing? It is precisely that through his own lack and weakness, the truthfulness of God and the glory of His abundant salvation are revealed all the more clearly.

Paul says as follows. *"If the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" (Romans 3:7)*. This means that the fact that God saved such people in spite of our false and weak state makes the righteousness of God shine all the more. In other words, the more our lack is revealed, the more greatly and the more brilliantly the grace by which the Lord saved us from sin appears.

Indeed, the Bible says as follows. *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)*. But in the next verse it continues as follows. *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)*. Therefore, that we have come to reach the glory of God through faith in the grace of redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit of which the Bible speaks.

Our lack is not an obstacle to grace. Rather, through that lack the grace of God is revealed more abundantly. The Bible also says as follows. *"Where sin abounded, grace abounded much*

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more" (Romans 5:20). That is right. The more a person knows his own lack, the more deeply the righteousness of God, who washed away those sins clean with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is engraved in his heart, and the more movingly it comes to him.

Dear fellow believers, is this true? Yes, it is. But even so, deliberately sinning more in order to experience grace more abundantly is a wrong attitude. There must be no motive to sin.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, as we live in this world we may at times make mistakes, be weak, and have our lack revealed. But each time, by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we are set free from all those sins and transgressions. Each time our lack is revealed, we confirm once again the fact that God has already remitted all those sins, we realize that the great love and grace of God are so amazing, vast, and endless, and we come to praise God all the more.

The apostle Paul is emphasizing precisely this point now.

"If the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" (Romans 3:7). This means that because the salvation God has given is far greater than the sins I have committed, through faith I am not judged.

This is precisely the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul testifies of unceasingly in the Book of Romans.

Because the salvation by which God saved us is great and the remission of sins that Jesus has given is great, the one who believes is not judged for his sins, but rather obtains the righteousness of God and enters the kingdom of heaven as a righteous person.

A righteous person is one who has believed in the righteousness of God and so has come to have no sin in his heart. He is a person who has received the remission of sins and has

the Holy Spirit dwelling in his heart. God loves the righteous forever and never sends them to hell. No matter how lacking a righteous person may be, God acknowledges the one who believes in the righteousness of God as one of His people and brings him into the kingdom of heaven.

But if one betrays this salvation, that is, if one denies the righteousness of God and forsakes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one is cut off from that blessing. This is precisely the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and this sin can never be remitted. Therefore, this sin, above all, we must never commit.

In the last days, Satan the devil forces the righteous to deny this gospel that Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again. But the one who has true faith never rejects the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The righteous cannot deny or turn away from the righteousness of God. No matter how much Satan deceives and threatens, that faith is not shaken. This strong faith makes martyrdom possible in the last days. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus has saved us completely, is so precious and valuable, we can keep that gospel to the end.

It is only because of weakness; in his heart he is one who believes in the Son of God

This is the word of Romans 3:8.

"And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just" (Romans 3:8).

Is it right to do evil in order to accomplish the righteousness of God? First, we must ask this question. Must we keep on

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sinning in order to make the righteousness of God more manifest? It is not so.

In the past as well as now, some people do not believe in the righteousness of God and instead slander those who believe, saying, “Since you say you have received the remission of all your sins, you will sin even more, won’t you?” In this way they distort and mock the righteousness of God.

But we must know clearly. Having received the remission of all sins from God does not mean sinning more. Rather, the righteous person who has received the remission of sins has a heart that wants not to sin any more. For since his heart is a holy temple, filthy sins cannot dwell in it.

But our flesh is weak, so even when we do not want to sin, at times we end up sinning. The reason we who have received the remission of sins commit sin is not in order to enjoy sin, but simply because we are weak or lacking in faith. That is, we have the faith of salvation, but we fall because we have little faith that holds firmly to the word of God.

Let me give an example.

Suppose a large load of baggage has arrived on a vehicle in front of the church. If that baggage has to be moved up to the third floor of the church, a person with good physical strength will be able to haul it up without any problem, but a person with weak physical strength will not. In that case, that weak person will end up leaving it to other brothers and sisters to move more of the baggage.

Likewise, a person whose faith is strong falls to sin less and can overcome it better, but a person whose faith is weak is weak and falls. But even such a person is still one who believes in the Son of God in his heart. God sees our innermost heart, knows our weakness, and embraces even such people as the righteous.

Therefore, we must not sin using the grace of the remission of sins as an excuse; rather, even in our weakness, we must hold firmly to the righteousness of God and strive to live a more holy life.

The life of the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the righteousness of God

Some people say as follows: “Since you have received the remission of sins, will you not now sin more throughout your whole life so that God may accomplish His righteousness?” But it is not so. Because we who believe in the righteousness of God have received the remission of all sins, we know sin as sin and do not want to sin any more.

Nevertheless, the reason we sin as we live in this world is that our flesh is weak. But the important fact is that all our sins have already been remitted by believing in the righteousness of God. That is why we have no sin in our hearts, and even if we sin out of weakness we are not condemned, but rather abide in the grace of God.

But conversely, the person who does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, no matter how much he says, “I believe in Jesus,” is still a sinner before God. The faith of the apostle Paul, who considered it only natural that such a person goes to hell because of that sin, is truly amazing.

This word of the Book of Romans was written about 2,000 years ago from now, when it was not yet even A.D. 100. And yet, in that age too, just as now, there were those who slandered the apostle Paul in this way. Those who misunderstood and mocked the one who believed in the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit and thus believed in the righteousness of God existed even then. Is this not amazing? It is amazing.

There is one reason for this. It is because this word is the word of God, and so it does not change even now.

Satan the devil attacks the born-again in the same way, in the old days as now. But what we must remember is the fact that the truth that we can overcome all of Satan's deceptions and attacks by believing in the righteousness of God is also unchanging.

Therefore, whenever Satan attacks your hearts and the Church of God, we must overcome by the faith that believes in the righteousness of God.

Satan always says as follows: "Since you say you have received the remission of sins, are you not saying that you will sin as you please and live even more wickedly?" But it is not so.

If we sin, it is because we are weak that we sin, not in order to abuse the remission of sins. When a righteous person sins, he immediately admits before God that it is wrong, and he comes to confess by faith that Jesus has already borne even that sin.

Each time we do so, we realize anew how great and amazing the grace of God is, the righteousness of God is engraved more deeply in our hearts, and His glory is revealed more greatly.

Then what advantage does the Jew have, and what profit does the one who believes in Jesus have? If one does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is no profit at all.

If one does not believe in the righteousness of God, and says one believes in Jesus while believing only in the blood of the Cross, or merely holds on to the religion called Christianity, that, too, is of no profit at all.

There is only one way that is of true profit to us.

It is precisely believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which the righteousness of God is revealed.

Of course, even a righteous person who has received the remission of sins can sin in this world.

But because Jesus has already borne all those sins as well, when we acknowledge those sins and hold on to the word of God, we come to believe that the remission of those sins, too, has already been accomplished.

Do you have this faith? Yes, you do.

It is not that we do more evil because we have received the remission of sins; rather, we come to hope to live more holy lives.

Dear beloved fellow believers, if you say you believe in Jesus but have not yet returned to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, return at this very hour. Then you will obtain the righteousness of God. And when the blessing of believing in that righteousness comes upon your hearts, your preaching of the gospel, too, will bear abundant fruit.

I bless you that the Lord may be with you. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Salvation that comes by faith

< Romans 3:1–31 >

“What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: ‘That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.’ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say, ‘Let us do evil that good may come’?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just. What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.’ ‘Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit’; ‘The poison of asps is under their lips’; ‘Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have

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not known.' 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

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The advantage of the Jews and the faithfulness of God

Continuing to speak about the Jews, the apostle Paul speaks of those who will be judged and those who will not, of those who have the law yet either believe or do not believe, and of those who believe the word of God and those who do not. In chapter 3, he speaks about the Jews and speaks about faith. God saved us not by works but by His grace, and we become righteous by believing this in our hearts. The word says, *"What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1–2).*

What advantage do the Jews have over the Gentiles? Much in every way, and first of all, it is that they were entrusted with the word of God. Because God gave the word to His servants through the Jews, they are not the same as the Gentiles. It means that from the time they were little, from the time of their ancestors, they lived hearing the word of God. The Jews were entrusted with the word of God, and because the word of God is conveyed through them, they are better off than the Gentiles.

But these Jews did not believe. As the apostle Paul saw it, the people of Israel did not believe, and for that reason they were cast away before God. The word says, *"What if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not!" (Romans 3:3–4)*. God's being faithful means that He is trustworthy. Would that trustworthiness of God—the things He intends to do, that promise of salvation that He saves everyone who believes—be made without effect just because the Jews do not believe? Would it be canceled, then? It means that it would not. If the Jews do not believe, the Gentiles will believe, and anyone at all who only believes God's promise

receives salvation. The Jews are better off than the Gentiles, and they hold the word of God and preach it, but because they do not believe, they are cast away. Yet that does not mean that the things God intends to do are canceled or go unfulfilled just because they do not believe.

This word the apostle Paul is speaking is the same as saying that God has now given the gift of salvation to many people. God spoke in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament He sent His Son Jesus Christ and accomplished it all. Yet some people believe this and some people do not. Would the blessing of God, who clothes everyone who believes with the grace of becoming a child of God, be canceled just because many people do not believe? It means that it would not. Anyone at all who only believes can receive that great love of God. But those who do not believe are excluded from that blessing because they themselves do not believe the word of God, because they do not believe the blessing of God. What if they did not believe? Faith is tremendously important. The apostle Paul spoke of those who will be judged and those who will not, and having said that circumcision is that of the heart, in chapter 3 he speaks about faith. He also spoke about sin, and he spoke precisely about those who will go to hell. The gift of salvation has been conveyed to us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and then rose again from death and accomplished the salvation He had promised.

Who is it that receives judgment? Even one who has the law, if he does not believe the word, receives judgment through the law. The Gentiles who do not have the law know right from wrong because their own conscience becomes their law, but

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because they do not serve God even though they know that God lives and that God exists, because they do not believe even though their conscience clearly testifies to them, they receive judgment and go to hell.

The apostle Paul now goes on to unfold the matter of faith. God made His decision once, and He gave the gift of salvation and the gift of glory and splendor to those among all mankind who believe. Although Adam sinned and all his descendants are born sinners, God decided before the foundation of the world to send His Son and to clothe all who believe in the redemption of that Son with the blessing of becoming children of God. This decision is fulfilled according to God's will for those who believe the word of God, while those who do not believe are judged and cast away through their unbelief.

The apostle Paul also said, *"But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things" (Romans 2:2)*. Those who truly go to hell through unbelief do not receive that great gift of God. Those who do not believe the Creator's gift of salvation do not believe what God has done; even though God is not giving them something bad and has already given them the blessing, they do not believe it. They go to hell because, in a pride that sets themselves higher than God, they do not accept the blessing of God. Since we know that the judgment of God is according to truth, it means that it is only right for such people to go to hell.

So it is by faith that what God intends—to save us faithfully without making His faithfulness without effect, to make us His children, and to give us the eternal world called the kingdom of heaven—is fulfilled for us. It is fulfilled through our accepting the faithfulness of God, that trustworthiness of His, that blessing. The word says, *"Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, And*

may overcome when You are judged'" (Romans 3:4). It is man who is false. We cannot but say that God is true. Why is that? Because the Lord promises by His word and, according to His promise, blesses those whom He will bless and curses those whom He will curse. Therefore God is not false. It is man who is false, not God. So the Lord, both when He judges and when He saves us, judges by the word and saves by the word. God promised in His word that He would save us in such and such a way, and the Word actually became flesh, came among us, and saved us. We can confirm that faithfulness in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The baptism Jesus received from John in order to have all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, the blood He shed on the Cross in order to receive the judgment for those sins in our place, and His rising again from death are our salvation, accomplished according to the word.

The Lord is truly faithful and trustworthy. There is not a single falsehood in Him. If anyone is false, it is Satan the devil who is false and man who is false. By what does the Lord overcome Satan the devil? He overcomes by the word. Because the Lord has spoken in this way and fulfilled all that He spoke, God is upright and faithful before Satan the devil, before men, and before all spiritual beings. God has never once spoken a word in error, and never once failed to carry out what He has spoken. That is why the apostle Paul said that, as for where the faith we believe with must have its foundation, it must have it in the word of God.

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The righteousness of God revealed by our unrighteousness

The word says, *"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" (Romans 3:5)*. God is righteous and all of us mankind are false, yet it says that our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God. It is asking what objection there could be if the unrighteousness of us men, that is, the sin of mankind, demonstrates the righteousness of God. That the righteousness of God is revealed through the sins, weaknesses, and falseness of you and me—God is truly the God of love. God is truly the faithful One and our Savior. He is the true God who promised by His word and fulfilled it according to His word. In fact, it is because of us that the righteousness of God is revealed.

Truly, loving someone who deserves to be loved is not real love. The reason we can know that God is the God of love is that He treated us, who could not possibly be loved, with love and gave us love. That is true love. We were false and were betrayers of God, were those who did not believe in God, and were those who had nothing whatsoever lovable before God. We were the kind of people who only committed sin and only did evil. Yet if the sins of you and me demonstrate the righteousness of God, what shall we say? When mankind sinned, having fallen for the enticement of Satan the devil, when all of us could do nothing but go to hell, even when we took not God's side but rather the side of Satan the devil, God sent His Son and, out of love, saved us from the hand of that devil, from the power of darkness, from hell, and from every curse. This is the grace of God and the love of God.

At this word of the apostle Paul, the thinking of those who believe and those who do not believe is divided. People try to go

to heaven and try to receive the blessing of God by living good lives before God. But the apostle Paul is saying the opposite. The apostle Paul knows that we human beings are lives sunk in sin, unable to do righteousness and unable to live good lives, and he says that our Lord has saved such human beings and has loved them. Because we commit sin, we needed a Savior and we needed the Lord's love. Our being saved is owing to the Lord's perfect love and the gift of salvation by the grace He gave freely. It means that we have been saved through Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul places his salvation in the righteousness of God. Our salvation depends on the right work of God, who loved him and saved him, entirely on the right work of God, and it is by that that we have been saved.

But people say, even before they believe in Jesus, that one must live a good life before God in order to go to heaven. However, it is wrong to make efforts with the thought that one goes to heaven by living a good life before God. Where is there a person who can live a good life before God? There is not a single one. We must change the thought that we can live good lives. The apostle Paul is saying that we have been saved by faith. People are under the illusion that they are saved only if they live good lives. That is why, even among those who believe in Jesus, the thinking of a person who has been saved and that of a person who has not been saved differ. A person who believes in Jesus and has been perfectly saved says, "Because I myself am this weak, the Lord came to save me and saved me. Our unrighteousness makes the righteousness of God shine. Let us believe in the righteousness of God, who made me His child, and boast of and praise that righteousness." But a person who has not been born again thinks that he can go to heaven only if he believes in Jesus and lives a good life even more diligently, and that if he fails to live a good life, he goes to hell. Through this

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word we can know that the faith of the apostle Paul and the faith of us born-again people are the same, and that the thinking of those who have not been born again is wrong. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our unrighteousness and falseness, passed on to Him once and for all. Believing in Jesus, who bore those sins, shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment in our place and died, and rose again from death, is the faith that believes in the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The word says, *"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just" (Romans 3:5–8)*. While speaking of the way of faith, the apostle Paul says, speaking as a man speaks, that people say this. Is God who inflicts wrath unjust? Certainly not. God sends those who do not believe to hell. But the unbelievers say that it is God's fault to send them to hell just because they do not believe what Jesus has perfectly accomplished for salvation.

But even though people say so, in fact it is not so. Is God unjust? Does God commit sin? Does God judge wrongly and become angry wrongly? Certainly not. If that were so, how could God judge the world? If God were an unjust One, One who commits sin, One who judges wrongly, how could He judge the world? Then God could not be God. The only One who can truly judge others, who can judge this world precisely, is the true God. When one has sin oneself, who can judge another? When one

has sin oneself, one cannot judge another. God, the true God who saved us, because He has not even the slightest sin in Himself, saved us, and is able to judge this world, to send Satan the devil to hell, and to send those who do not believe to hell.

The word says, *"For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" (Romans 3:7).* Those who do not believe say, "If you have received the remission of sins, then you will sin as you please. Since God has saved you and you have been saved by the righteousness of God, you will tell even more lies. If God has saved you like that, you will deliberately sin even more. Wouldn't the truth of God and His glory become more abundant through your telling more lies and committing more sins?" People say to the apostle Paul, "If you say that you are saved by faith and are saved without a single work, if you say that all your sins have been remitted, then you will sin even more. So you will give even more glory to God," but it is not so.

The word that follows, *"And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say" (Romans 3:8),* is exactly the same as what people say now. This was written by the apostle Paul two thousand years ago, and people then also thought this way. Just like the people of this present age, they say, "If all the sins you commit throughout your life have been remitted, you will sin even more; you will deliberately sin even more," but in reality they cannot do so. The remission of sins is not permission to sin more, but the grace that tells us to believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished. Because Jesus bore the sin of the world, including our lifelong sins, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death.

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After receiving the remission of sins, one cannot sin more. There is a certain limit. Before receiving the remission of sins, one commits sin as a matter of course because one does not know sin, but after receiving the remission of sins, one is extremely sensitive. Evil does come out of a human being, but still, because one knows that what is wrong is wrong, one is all the less able to sin. Some people say to the apostle Paul, and to the born-again righteous, "Then will you not do evil in order to do good? Since you say that God has saved you from all sins, will you not say, 'Let us do evil'?" but of those who slander in this way, the word says, *"Their condemnation is just" (Romans 3:8)*. It means that it is right for such people to be judged and go to hell. Why is that? Because they do not abide in faith.

The apostle Paul asked what if some did not believe—whether their unbelief would make the faithfulness of God, the salvation God has given, without effect. If one believes, one receives salvation, and if one does not believe, one goes to hell. The righteousness of God still stands firm. It means that it stands solid. It is they who do not believe that go to hell; what God has done is never shaken and never becomes void. Regardless of people, the one who believes goes to heaven according to God's will, and the one who does not believe goes to hell according to God's will. That is why God sent a stumbling stone into this world. He sent Jesus, so that however evil a person may be, if he believes in Jesus, he obtains eternal life, and however good a person may be, if he does not perfectly believe what Jesus has done, he goes to hell. That is why He was called a stumbling stone. The apostle Paul is speaking about this faith. We must understand this Book of Romans well.

There is no such thing as a saved sinner

A person who has not been born again does not understand the Book of Romans and does not know the Bible well. We born-again people, too, say that we know the Book of Romans well, but in fact that is not so. If one does not know the Book of Romans, one's faith wavers back and forth and wavers according to one's deeds. Only when one knows the Book of Romans clearly can one's faith stand firm and can one live by faith. We must live rooted in the word of the Lord. With our deeds it is utterly impossible. When we know the word of God, we can live by faith and act by faith. If one does not know this word, one cannot live by faith and cannot stand by faith. It means that one only acts for a time and cannot stand firm in the heart by faith.

A person who has received the remission of sins is a righteous person. He has not a single sin. The word that Jesus is faithful means that He has in fact truly removed sins without leaving a single one. But can there be a saved sinner? Where is there a saved sinner? One has either been saved or not been saved; where is there a saved sinner? Where is there a righteous person who has sin? It means that it makes no sense. It is like asking, when a debt on credit has been paid off, where is there another debt on credit to pay?

Let us say that a father has a lot of money and has provided his son in advance, abundantly, with all that he will eat and spend throughout his life. Then, however much this son has eaten on credit, he is not a debtor, because his father has paid it off in advance. In the same way, when our Lord saved us once and for all, He saved us perfectly. However weak we may be, we cannot become sinners. Only, if we betray what He has done, go off on a side path, and depart from the word, we end up caught

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in the snare of Satan the devil and falling, but as long as that is not the case, it does not matter. Just as the debt has disappeared, the remission of sins, too, is perfect because Jesus has paid the price in full. Since Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, there is no sin remaining in us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Then how can there be a saved sinner? Do you know why people think this way? Thinking of a saved sinner comes from thinking with the flesh. How can one not sin with the flesh of man? Can one go to the kingdom of heaven by not sinning, by believing in Jesus and being changed, by becoming a holy person before God? If one thinks with the flesh, it is impossible. This flesh cannot be perfect. Whenever it is hungry, it must eat. This body is utterly incapable. Thinking in a fleshly way, how can one believe in Jesus, stop sinning, become as clean as white snow, and go to the kingdom of heaven? It is impossible. The reason people fail to be born again is that their thinking is in the flesh. Because they think in a fleshly way, it is impossible.

Let us think about the words “becoming a righteous person” and “being a righteous person” with fleshly thinking. If I think that I will become a righteous person, that I will become a person without a single sin, it is impossible. Even if I have believed up to today, tomorrow I will sin again, so it is impossible. The point is, how can one say one has no sin when one will go on sinning? And how can one say one is righteous without even praying prayers of repentance? One can be called righteous only if one receives the remission of sins each and every time; if one thinks with fleshly thinking, it is impossible. If we think with the flesh,

when will we ever become righteous? Can we avoid sinning in heart, in thought, or in deed? It is utterly impossible.

Do not think with the flesh, but believe with the heart

Then let us think the opposite way. The apostle Paul said in the Book of Romans, *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10)*. Let us think about believing with the heart. Our Lord has removed all our sins. He received baptism from John in the Jordan River, shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again from the tomb, and accomplished it at the right hand of the throne of the kingdom of God by the Holy Spirit, by the Spirit of God.

Then think with faith, with the heart. We have believed with our hearts what Jesus has done. God said that if one only believes in the salvation of Jesus with the heart, He sees that faith and declares him righteous. Then we believe with the heart and confess with the mouth: "Jesus is my Savior. Jesus has removed all my sins. He has removed all the sins I commit. He has removed not only the sins I am committing at present but also original sin and the sin of the world. Not only my sins but also the sins of my children, the sins of my ancestors, and the sin of all mankind—our Lord came to this earth and removed them all. So I believe with my heart." If we think with faith in the heart, is it possible? Can we say that we are righteous? Then we can say that we are righteous, we can call God Father, and we can call the Lord my Lord, my Savior. This faith is the heart.

Faith is to become righteous by believing with the heart; one cannot become righteous by deeds, by the flesh. By the flesh it

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does not work. But a person who has not been born again, though he believes in Jesus, thinks with the flesh, and so he cannot possibly say that he is righteous. Because he is bound to the flesh, he cannot call himself righteous, and he persecutes the righteous. Abraham begot Isaac and Ishmael. Ishmael was the child born of the bondwoman, and he was a full fourteen years older than Isaac. Ishmael persecuted the child born of the lawful wife. But as for who actually had the right of inheritance, the right to inherit all of Abraham's possessions belonged to Isaac, who was born of Sarah, the lawful wife. However much Ishmael tormented Isaac on the grounds that he was born first and was stronger, in reality Ishmael himself had to come under Isaac.

People who have not been born again persecute those who have been born again. They persecute because they have the flesh, but they, too, are saved if they know the truth and believe with the heart. Yet they say, "How can I be saved?" The apostle Paul said to them, *"If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9)*. He is telling them to consider whether the Spirit of Christ is in them. This word means that if one believes in Jesus with the heart, the Holy Spirit comes upon the heart. It is by the Holy Spirit that one can say that Jesus is my Savior. But a person who has not received the remission of sins learns from people who believe in Jesus with fleshly thinking, so only fleshly thinking is conveyed to him, and he does not know the truth of believing with the heart unto righteousness. Because they do not have the Holy Spirit, they cannot teach the truth. That is why these people, even though they believe in Jesus, are sinners, and cannot but persecute and oppose the born-again. They do not challenge us, the righteous, because they want to challenge us; they challenge and persecute us because their thinking is bound to the flesh. The truth of salvation that must be received into the heart is the gospel of the

water and the Spirit. After Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place because of that sin, and rose again from death and made us live.

We have flesh, but we are not bound to the flesh; we believe with the heart unto righteousness and live by the faith in our hearts, and so our thinking is different. That is why, however much one listens to the words of a person who has not been born again, one cannot be born again. The word says, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6)*. Only when one has the Holy Spirit can one say that Jesus is my Savior and preach the truth of this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

So they say, "Then will you not do evil in order to do good? If you have no sin, you will sin even more, won't you?" but it is not so. We are absolutely not so. This thing called faith is a tremendous thing. The word says, *"Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23)*. In all of our lives, if we do not believe in God, seek by faith, and act by faith, we are sure to fall into sin. Not only do we fall into sin, but we die completely. When we are believing, the parts that are lacking become whole and all parts become normal. It is possible when we live by faith. If we believe in God and then our faith disappears, we become bound to deeds and become a mess. If we do not believe, we cannot follow the Lord and become helpless beings. Faith overcomes everything. If we live by faith, problems are solved. But if we do not believe, we fall into confusion and die. It is so even after we are born again. As for faith, being saved is also by faith, and dealing with our brothers and sisters is also by faith.

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"There is none righteous, no, not one"

The word says, *"What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God" (Romans 3:9–11)*. What does this word mean? Is it a story about after we believe in Jesus and are born again, or is it speaking of our state before we believe in Jesus? It speaks of the state before believing in Jesus Christ. If we do not perfectly believe in Jesus Christ, as human beings we cannot become righteous. In theology there is the saying "to reach sanctification," but this saying, that we believe in Jesus and live good lives and so reach sanctification, in fact makes no sense. It is said that there is none righteous, no, not one; so how can a person become righteous by polishing and refining himself, by training and disciplining himself? One cannot become righteous. There is not a single one. There is none who understands; it means there is no one who even realizes that he is going to hell. They do not even realize that they are sinners. It said that there is not a single one who realizes that he is a sinner before God. There is none who seeks after God; human beings, though born before God, do not seek God. The reason we have become righteous is that, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sins we will commit throughout our lives, passed on to Him once and for all, and received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross.

It goes on to say, *"They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable" (Romans 3:12)*. Are we human beings profitable beings before God, or unprofitable beings? Before being born again, all mankind are unprofitable beings.

Though made by God, they do nothing but shake their fists at God every day, challenge Him and curse Him, and at every turn they curse God, saying, "Why does God not send rain and so let us die?" We are such useless human beings. That is why, at the time of Noah's flood, God swept away useless mankind entirely. They have all turned aside and together become unprofitable; how can a person who has sin in his heart glorify God? How can he give praise and glory to God? A sinner can never give glory to God.

The words 'turned aside' mean not knowing what God has done and not believing it. It means that they have not based themselves on what God has done, have not held on to it, but have turned aside to their own thoughts. They judge entirely by their own thinking, as if they themselves were God. But judgment belongs to God alone. Judgment, trial, and verdict belong to God alone, and the truth belongs to God alone; they do not belong to man. The words 'turned aside' mean that they have turned aside to their own thoughts. A person who does not give up his own thoughts, saying, "I think this way. I think this way and believe this way," is said to have turned aside. A person who has not been born again is himself the judge. It is not a matter of what is written in the word of God; he himself is the judge. Saying, "I think this way, I believe this way," he holds that whatever differs from him is wrong and whatever agrees with him is right, and that is how he has turned aside. We must be judged righteously.

We must be saved righteously, and we must be judged by God righteously. The One who is righteous is God, and the word of God is the truth. The word is the measuring rod. The word says, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1)*. Who is it that was with God the Father and the Holy Spirit? It is the Word. Of Jesus

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Christ, the King of kings, the Book of Revelation says, *"His name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13)*. That it says He "was" means that He was with God in the beginning. The Word is Jesus Himself, our Savior, and the Word is God Himself. So it means that the word of the Bible is God Himself.

This has nothing to do with our thinking. If one thinks with the flesh about how the Word can be God, if one thinks of some form, one would say, "There has to be something there for it to be called God; how can the Word be God?" But if the Word is said to be God, then He is God. He is God indeed, but His very substance is that of the God who is the Word. It means that it is different from our thinking. How does a created being dare to try to understand the Creator? That is ignorance. They have all turned aside and together become unprofitable. The human being who is useful before God is the one who stands firm in faith, in the word. That person is one who is used before God and is a profitable person. One who firmly believes the word is a person of faith, and that person is a person profitable to God, a useful person, and a person who receives blessing. To firmly believe the word is to accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the word testifies of. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross, and then rose again from death, it is to believe in the salvation of Jesus without looking for any usefulness in ourselves.

The word says, *"There is none who does good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12)*. Does our flesh do good? Setting the heart aside for a moment, does our flesh do good? It is speaking of the very substance of man; how can man do good? It said that there is none who does good, no, not one; this means that there is not a single person, and it also means that, before we are born again,

there is not a single right thing in how we human beings ourselves live before God. It is all rebellion. For man to pretend to be holy, pretend to be good, pretend to do good, and pretend to show mercy is to challenge God. The only One who is good is God. Yet for someone who has not believed in Jesus and been born again, who has not accepted His love and righteousness, to say that he does good is to challenge and to oppose God.

Do you think that only those who commit great sins in this world suffer the wrath of God? Even a person who lives a good life without believing in Jesus Christ and without being born again is committing sin that leads to hell. He must receive fearful punishment. One must come before God saying, "This is the kind of person I am," and ask for mercy; if instead one plays the hypocrite, whitewashing one's outer shell with goodness and pretending to do good, it becomes a challenge to God. Satan the devil tried to become higher than God. That Satan the devil tells people to do good and to live good lives. Among those who do not believe in Jesus, is there anyone in whom the thought that one must live a good life is not firmly lodged? As for who brought that to them, it was Satan the devil who brought it. Originally, man cannot live a good life. He must receive the remission of sins before God. God says through His word that one must receive the remission of sins. To do good is to challenge God. Then is He telling us to do evil? That is not it either. He is telling us to accept the word of God.

The word goes on to say, *"'Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit'; 'The poison of asps is under their lips'; 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.' 'Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.' 'There is no fear of God before their eyes'" (Romans 3:13–18)*. It is saying that this is what man is like. If only he is

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given something to eat, he is one who betrays God even at the cost of going to hell, and one who lives only for the life of the flesh. With their tongues they have practiced deceit; I cannot tell you how well they deceive. Everyone deceives others well. Jesus said of the devil, *"When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources" (John 8:44)*. People say, "I am telling you the truth; this is the truth," but all those words they insist are true are lies. Have you ever seen a swindler say, "This is a swindle," when he swindles? He speaks exactly as if it were true. When he says, "I am telling you the honest truth: if you just invest here, you will make money. This is brand new, and if you get in on it now, it will be fantastic," people fall for it. Whenever swindlers lie, they lie as if it were true, from their own resources.

It said, *"The poison of asps is under their lips" (Romans 3:13)*, and how much do people who have not been born again curse us and speak like the poison of asps when they look at us! This word—that their feet are swift to shed blood, that destruction and misery are in their ways, that they have not known the way of peace, and that there is no fear of God before their eyes—is a word found in the Old Testament. This is what people who have not received the remission of sins become. The work of saving us, who were under sin like this, is also recorded in the word. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death. Even our cursing and bitterness are included in all those sins.

"By the law is the knowledge of sin"

The word says, *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law" (Romans 3:19)*. As for to whom God gave that law, He gave it to those who have not been born again, to those who do not yet know sin as sin. It means that God gave the law in order to teach people that they are sinners who cannot live according to the law of God. If the law was not given for us to keep it, do we then make void the law? It means that we certainly cannot. Every word of God, whatever it may be, is right. It is right to believe and live according to the word of God. Whether it is the law or the word of faith, every word is right.

The word says, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)*. A born-again person knows that by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight. The apostle Paul, too, said of himself and of the born-again servants of God that there is no one who will keep the law and no one who has kept it. For that reason, it means that one cannot become righteous by the deeds of the law, by works. The apostle Paul knows it so, believes it so, and speaks it so. So do we, the righteous. Can we become righteous by the law? We cannot. Is it correct to say that after we believe in Jesus, we live good lives by our deeds, are changed into holiness, and enter the kingdom of heaven? It is not correct.

In Christianity there is the doctrine of sanctification. It says that after one believes in Jesus, this body becomes holy, and having become holy, one later enters the kingdom of heaven. Of course, our Lord, the Holy Spirit, makes us holy. But we do not become holy in the flesh. However hard one tries to live a good life, it does not work. It is impossible. By the deeds of the law

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no flesh will be justified in His sight. Where on this earth is there a person who lives according to the law? Even after being born again, there is no one who lives according to the law. By the law is the knowledge of sin—it is really simple. One who has come to know sin through the law must believe in the salvation accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all, including, of course, the sins we committed by breaking the law, and then received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

In the age of innocence of Adam and Eve, sin was handed down in full to the descendants of those who fell to Satan the devil, did not believe the word of God, and departed from the word. They inherited sin, but they did not know that they were sinners. After the age of Abraham had passed and the age of Jacob had passed, Abraham had become righteous by faith, but the Israelites knew neither faith nor sin well. So God gave the law to these people to make them realize and know sin, and made it so that they would receive the remission of sins through believing the word of God's promise, through believing the Tabernacle system. In that way, the law is meant to make people realize and know sin.

"The righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe"

The word says, *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets" (Romans 3:21)*. When the apostle Paul said that now the righteousness of God apart from the law has been revealed,

being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, he was speaking precisely of the word of the Old Testament. It is the righteousness of God revealed through the Tabernacle system. He is speaking of that righteousness by which the remission of sins is received through the sacrificial offering. He went on to say, *"Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference" (Romans 3:22)*. The righteousness of God that comes through faith to all who believe! Our faith is in the heart. The substance of faith is Jesus Christ. The word says, *"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2)*. What we are really to believe in is believing in our Lord with the heart, believing in Jesus. It is the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ to all who believe, and there is no difference. One becomes righteous by believing with the heart and receives the assurance of perfect salvation by confessing with the mouth. We have been saved not by works but by faith.

After being saved, we get much bound up in deeds, but if we believe in God, we are righteous whatever shortcomings we have. As long as we do not betray Him, then when we hear the word, the Holy Spirit within us says, "That is right, that is correct." We are saved by faith, and in that there is no difference. If we are not set right by the word of God, we try to serve the Lord with our own goodness. It is because we are evil that the desire arises to give thanks before the Lord, to devote ourselves, and to live for the Lord; if we were fundamentally good, we would be satisfied and so would have no desire to serve the Lord. It is because we are utterly useless human beings that we can live for the Lord. We are thankful that He has given us work, and the desire to live for the Lord arises. It is because there is nothing to expect from ourselves. But a person who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit yet does not know what kind

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of sinner he is, a person who has not been perfectly saved, tries to serve the Lord with his own goodness, and so he falls into evil and ends up departing far from the Lord. The righteousness of God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe is salvation received by faith.

The word says, *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:23–25)*. All have sinned. So we fell short of the glory of God and could do nothing but go to hell. But through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, by the grace of God, we have freely reached the glory of God and have become those who are justified. In the righteousness received freely there is the price that Jesus paid. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood and died on the Cross in order to pay the price of those sins. The righteousness and life He gave by rising again from death we have received freely.

It said that God set forth this Jesus as a propitiation by His blood, through faith. It said that this was *"to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25–26)*, and here the words "set forth" mean that God set forth Jesus as the Savior of the whole universe, as the offering that reconciles us with God. That propitiation was precisely the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood He shed on the Cross, and His life. Because God set forth Jesus as the propitiation, He made it so

that we could be reconciled with God and go to heaven. It speaks of God, in His forbearance, having passed over the sins that were previously committed.

The remission of sins the Lord has given us is in the past perfect tense; we receive by faith what He has already done. People will go on sinning in the future because the flesh is lacking. Regarding this, God said that He passes over the sins that were previously committed. It means that the sins we people commit at present are, in God's sight, sins previously committed. This is because salvation has been fully accomplished through the remission of sins the Lord gave. It means that the sins we commit now are sins previously committed, sins that, in God's sight, He has already removed. To pass over means that He looks past them, and that He has already paid the price. And here the words "set forth" mean that, for salvation from all sins, God set forth His Son Jesus Christ as the Savior. Because He set forth Jesus Christ, anyone who believes in Him is saved from all sins.

The salvation the Lord has given us means that He passes over all the sins people have committed from the time this earth began until the day the world ends. It means that He has remitted all the sins previously committed. God sent His Son and has already removed all the sins of this world, and the people of this world are now committing sins that have already been removed. But the sins of all people have already been completely removed by Jesus, who had them transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross. That is how it is in God's sight. Believe that the sin of the world has already been removed.

If you and I do not know this, or do not know the meaning of the word, we get confused when we preach it to others. What is passing over? To pass over means that He looks past them. God has said that the sin of mankind is nothing. Why is that? It means

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that while the people of this world are committing sins, God does not rebuke them for committing sins, but rebukes them for the sin of not believing. Yet people do not know this because they so disregard the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given. We must listen well to the word of God and believe it well. Only then is it a great help to our own faith. It is beneficial not only when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others, but beneficial to ourselves. Because God set forth Jesus as the propitiation, He calls the sins we commit sins previously committed. He says they are the sin of the world that Jesus has already completely removed. So we can say that we are righteous by believing in the remission of sins Jesus has given. A sinner has become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The word says, *"To demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26)*. At the present time, that is, at that time when God sent Jesus Christ, just as it 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)*, God demonstrated His righteousness. God promised and fulfilled it. He sent His Son to this earth, had Him receive baptism from John, and delivered Him up to be crucified. That act was the remission of sins of love, done because He loved us. God showed that He is the God of love, and showed that He is the Savior who saves us from sin. God is Himself righteous, and because we believe in Jesus with the heart, He declared us righteous, without sin. For Jesus has done the righteous work of removing all the sin of the world. So salvation is received through believing with the heart in what our God has done. In the remission of sins there is not the slightest work involved.

The law of the remission of sins is the law of faith

The word says, *"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:27–31)*. This means that we establish the word of God. That we establish the word of God means that we have been saved by faith. Even after we have been saved from all sins, if we look by the law of God, we are weak and imperfect beings who can do nothing but go to hell. It means that God has made such people as us perfect. That we have become perfect, though our deeds are lacking, has come about by the grace of the word of God. Our Lord spoke to us even after we were saved from sin. It means that although we are lacking, the Lord has perfectly saved us. We have been saved from sin by believing in the Lord with the heart. Therefore it is by faith that we come to go before God.

We must know the law of salvation. In the kingdom of God there is the law of the remission of sins. We need only believe according to that law. By what law? Of works? No. It has come about only by the law of faith. Being saved before God happens when one believes the truth with the heart, not by works. It has come about by the law of faith. Our Lord is speaking this word of Romans chapter 3 through the apostle Paul. Can our not believing the word of the water and the Spirit make the faithfulness of God without effect? The one who believes receives the remission of sins, and the one who does not believe

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goes to hell. God has perfectly saved us from all sins. What this law of faith points to is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The salvation in which Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross in order to receive that judgment in our place, and rose again from death—this we receive by believing with the heart.

We are saved by believing in the gospel of the remission of sins, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And by faith we receive blessing, by faith we inherit the kingdom of God, and by faith we obtain peace on this earth. But the one who does not believe does not know peace and does not obtain peace, and goes to hell through unbelief. To what is salvation owed? First, it is owed to the love of God, and by believing in that salvation by which God saved us through Jesus Christ, we have been saved from all sins.

We give praise to our Lord. The Lord has given us this faith and this remission of sins. We give thanks that He has given to you and me the truth the apostle Paul knew, this faith the apostle Paul had. We praise the Lord, who has revealed to us, to this church, this world of the word that the apostle Paul had. We give thanks and praise that we, too, have come to be saved by this faith. Without this faith and this remission of sins, we could only have gone to hell and were those who could not possibly be saved. But by believing in our Lord, and because there is the Church of God that preaches this word to us, we have become those who believe with the heart unto righteousness and confess with the mouth unto salvation. Now all that remains for us is to enjoy blessing through this truth within us, and all that remains is to live by faith before our God and give glory to God. Our Lord has given us the law of faith and made it so that we are saved from all sins. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Can the faithfulness of God be made without effect because people do not believe?

< Romans 3:3–8 >

"For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged.' But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just."

We have received the remission of sins through the salvation by which the Lord saved us. Our Lord came to this earth and, by receiving baptism from John in the Jordan River, removed all the sins that we human beings commit from the time we are born until we die, both the sin we inherited through our parents and all the offenses we commit while we live.

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He also received the judgment of being nailed to the Cross in our place, and so He saved you and me, who believe in that Jesus Christ, from all sins. So we have been saved by believing in our hearts in that salvation by which Jesus Christ saved us with the water and the blood. That is why we have become people without sin. It is because we have believed in our hearts in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus, through the baptism He received from John in the Jordan River, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rose again from death, and so remitted all our sins.

Yet, now that we have received the remission of sins by faith, some people slander us, saying, "Then, since you have now received the remission of sins, you may sin as much as you please. And since God has saved you who are evil and has made the righteousness of God manifest, you who have received the remission of sins will now say, 'Let us do more evil.'" There are people who think of us this way even now.

I do not know exactly, but I think it was about two thousand years ago that the apostle Paul came to write this Book of Romans. At that time there were saints who had been saved by believing in Jesus Christ in their hearts, and people who were not born again tormented these saints.

Jesus Christ has truly removed all the sins of us human beings, and the question is this: just because we human beings do not believe this, will that make the faithfulness of God without effect? Can it nullify what God has done in removing our sins?

"*For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: 'That You may*

be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged'" (Romans 3:3–4).

If one does not believe, it is hell

"Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?" (Romans 3:3). This word means that the salvation by which God has removed all our sins is not made without effect just because we human beings do not believe in God's faithful and true salvation—the salvation in which God spoke in the Old Testament, and then in the New Testament came Himself according to that word, bore sin, died on the Cross, rose again three days after He died, and so completely removed the sin of mankind.

If one does not believe, there is nothing left but for that person to receive the consequence of his own unbelief and go to hell; but if one asks whether God's having removed all the sins of us human beings is nullified just because we do not believe, it is not so. Certainly not.

Even if we do not believe, on God's side He has already removed all our sins. Only, whether we receive salvation or not is according to the law of faith, and so the one who believes receives the gift of salvation. Then what about the one who does not believe? Although God has removed all our sins and made us people without sin, because that person did not believe, through that unbelief his sins remain in him just as they are, and so he receives judgment.

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The promise of the Old and New Testaments is the laying on of hands, baptism, and the Cross

Jesus has removed all our sins. God has removed all the sin of mankind, whether original sin, actual sins, or future sins, without exception. Even though He has removed them all, people go to hell because they do not believe; it is not that God's removal of our sins is nullified. Even so, there is still no sin.

But because the one who does not believe does not accept God's gift of salvation, salvation does not become his own, and because he does not believe and so that gift of salvation is not in his heart, he goes to hell.

Our God spoke in the Old Testament. He established the law of atonement as an everlasting statute, that by laying hands on a goat or a lamb to pass on sins, and by the death of the sacrificial offering, that sinner would be set free from sin and saved. And the sacrificial offering that had those sins passed on to it—that is, the lamb, the goat, or the bull—had to shed its blood and die, because it had those sins passed on to it. And its body had to suffer death, that is, had to be burned in the fire.

Everything on this altar of burnt offering showed us concretely the law of God that says that *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. Our Lord made this promise in the Old Testament, and He promised that in the New Testament the Messiah, the Savior, would come in the future, have people's sins passed on to Him in this way, receive the judgment in their place, and save them.

The people of the Old Testament were saved by believing in this promise. And from four hundred years before Jesus came there had been no servant of God, and then a servant of God appeared, and he was John the Baptist. From this time the promise of the New Testament age begins to be fulfilled.

For about four hundred years there had been no servant of God, and then suddenly a servant of God appeared in the wilderness and cried out, *"Repent" (Matthew 3:2)* and *"Brood of vipers!" (Matthew 3:7)*. That man wore a garment of camel's hair and lived in the open country, eating locusts and wild honey (natural honey).

And he cried out to the people to repent. He cried out, "Repent and return. And you must have your sins washed away." And a little later Jesus Christ appears. John the Baptist, who had come six months ahead of Jesus Christ, at this time gave Jesus baptism, the very first work in Jesus' work of salvation, and passed on all the sins of mankind to Him.

What He had promised in the Old Testament, our God fulfilled entirely in the New Testament by being born on this earth, Himself clothed in human form; and just as the lamb, the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament, had people's sins passed on to it by receiving the laying on of hands, Jesus, who is God, Himself had all the sins of mankind passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist.

Having thus had all the sins of mankind passed on to Him, He went toward the Cross bearing the sin of the world, and by being nailed to it Himself in their place and shedding His blood, He saved people from sin and from judgment.

And He rose again three days after He died, sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, and lives forever, and so He has become the Savior of those who believe in Him. The word says, *"As it is written: 'That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged'" (Romans 3:4)*. In other words, He made a promise and fulfilled exactly what He had promised. God Himself promised people in the Old Testament, "I will have your sins passed on to Me in this way. And I will save you in this way," and exactly as He had promised, He

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clothed Himself in human flesh and was born on this earth through the body of the virgin Mary; when He turned thirty He bore all the sin of mankind, and at thirty-three He was nailed to the Cross and died, and so He fulfilled it completely as the word said and saved mankind from sin.

That the Lord may overcome by His word

So God never loses to Satan the devil, nor does He lose to people, nor does He lose to those who do not believe. It says that the Lord is justified in His words and overcomes when He is judged by His words. Because He promised and fulfilled exactly as He had promised, whatever the devil might say against God, our God had nothing to be ashamed of even before Satan the devil.

"Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? Certainly not!" (Romans 3:3–4). So we are saved through faith and obtain eternal life through faith. If we do not believe, we come to receive judgment through that unbelief. So God set the way by which we human beings are saved, and that was none other than faith. By the law of faith, He decreed, "If you believe, I will save you, and if you do not believe, it is hell."

Dear fellow believers, is there really a messenger of death? There is. When a person dies, it appears and drags him away. *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*. It is not that a human life is born once and dies once and then it is all over. After that there is judgment. The messenger of death drags a person away and sends him to the place he is to be sent. Where does it send him? Those who are to be sent to hell, it sends to hell.

While our Lord was dying on the Cross, when the thief on one side believed in the Lord and said to Jesus, *"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42)*, what did He say? Our Lord says, *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43)*.

A person who is born again is surely in a good place. But a person who is not born again is surely in a place that is not good. There is hell, there is the kingdom of heaven, there is the messenger of death, and there is also the way God has set to save us. The way to save us human beings from sin is faith that believes in His salvation in the heart. If one believes, it is salvation, and if one does not believe, it is a curse. Faith alone was the only way by which God saved us.

Our unrighteousness and the righteousness of God

Faith was the way God granted us so that we could be saved. Then a person who has been saved by believing in Jesus as his own Savior does not say that he himself is something great.

Then what do we say? Those who are born again say, "We are unrighteous. We sin. There are so many things we do wrong. Yet even though we are human beings who are this weak and lacking and who sin until we die, we have been saved by believing in God, by believing in that salvation of Jesus Christ, and the more our weakness is revealed, the more brightly the righteousness of God shines."

"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to

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His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" (Romans 3:5–7). This is what this word means.

Dear fellow believers, God has truly remitted the sins of those who have sin and are unrighteous, of us who sin until we die, and He saved us through God's right salvation. And the point is that if we have been saved even though we human beings are weak, the righteousness of God is revealed all the more.

"If our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" (Romans 3:5). Dear fellow believers, we are those who sin until we die. In Ecclesiastes it says, *"There is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin" (Ecclesiastes 7:20)*. Many people instinctively and commonly think wrongly that one becomes righteous only by believing in Jesus and not sinning, but if we were human beings who could avoid sinning, our Lord would have had no need to save us. And the righteousness of God would not shine.

The righteousness of God would be like that half-moon up there: only half of it would glitter with light, and the other half would glitter with the light of man, a yellowish light like the color of ocher soil. If God saved us because we human beings had done something well, and if man were said to have been saved because he too had done something well, then there would be few people who are particularly thankful before Jesus, and they would not even give thanks.

There is not even 0.1 percent of our own merit in salvation

If even 0.1 percent of our own merit were to enter into our being saved, we would forget the 99.9 percent of the merit of that salvation that is God's. Dear fellow believers, man has

nothing much to boast of before God. I cannot tell you how much people boast if they have even one small thing to be proud of. Isn't that so? Such being the nature of man, if God removed only the sins we committed until we believed, and the sins we commit from then on after believing were to be remitted by us human beings offering prayers of repentance or mobilizing some deed or some means and method, then man would have nothing for which to praise Jesus and nothing for which to sing praise to Jesus.

Rather, man praises his own human deeds. The word *"if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" (Romans 3:5)* means that we are those who sin until we die. It means that our Lord bore once and for all the sins of us who sin until we die, until our last breath, and settled them once and for all, and so saved us.

This is God's salvation. When we had not yet even been born, when we were not yet even in the loins of our ancestors, our God saved us. To make us God's people, God came to this earth and bore all the sin of mankind in the Jordan River.

And so He Himself received the judgment for all the sins of this world and saved us. This is God's salvation. And that salvation was accomplished once and for all. Even before you and I were born, about two thousand years ago from now, you and I had already become people without sin.

In Jesus' sight, you and I already existed from that time; when Jesus Himself received baptism from John in the Jordan River, we had already been born, He had already borne all our sins, and not only we but also our descendants existed in Jesus' sight. In Jesus' sight, you and I, who would exist about two thousand years later, already existed even then.

For because He was God in His very nature, because He is the eternal One, in His sight we were already visible. It was

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visible to Him that you and I sin, that you and I were conceived through sin in our mothers' wombs and born in sin.

And it was visible to Him that we sin from birth until death. So, in order to remove our sins, He received baptism from John and washed them away clean. Even though we had not yet been born, He saved us. And He became our true Savior, our God. This was God's salvation and the righteousness of God.

On human beings who cannot help but sin until they die, and the righteousness of God

"If our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" (Romans 3:5). Do we have anything to say before this word? Before the righteousness of God, which made us without sin even though we sin, do we have anything to object to in the fact that God has saved us? Or is there something we want to argue about?

"Wait, we had not even been born, so how could You take away all those sins in advance and make things so dull like that? If we sin, we ought to receive judgment, and only then would there be something interesting about it; but You have made it so there is no thrill at all. Even though You are God, isn't this too coercive a salvation? Isn't it too unconditional a salvation? Isn't it too one-sided a salvation? You took away our sins without even asking us—isn't this somehow a little strange?"

Are there perhaps any souls who would talk back to God like that? On the contrary, we can only give thanks. If, through our lying, because we are human beings who cannot help but sin, God's true salvation becomes more abundant through that, and if God's salvation, His love, which saved human beings who sin

until they die, and God Himself become all the more glorious, would you understand that?

Even though we are this lacking, even though people are this lacking, God has made people into those who have not a single sin. Through our weakness of sinning, the glory of God has been revealed all the more greatly. Those who believe never receive judgment.

But those who do not believe receive judgment. The person who does not acknowledge his sins, the person who does not believe that Jesus took away all his sins, that He removed them all once and for all—that person receives judgment. He becomes a sinner. If one believes, one is righteous; if one does not believe, one is a sinner. But it says that some people slander as follows.

The slander sinners speak

In verse 8 it says, *"Why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?" (Romans 3:8)*, and what this means is: "If you say you have been saved by believing that Jesus took away even the sins committed by human beings who cannot help but sin until they die, and if you say that your being saved is the righteousness of God, the rightness of God, and the glory of God, then would you not say, 'Let us sin more so that the glory of God may shine more brightly'? Would you not say, 'Let us sin even more'?" Since some people slander the righteous with such words, the apostle Paul said that it is just for them to be condemned.

This means that their sins remain just as they are, and that it is fitting for them to go to hell because of their sins. Among those who have received the remission of sins, where is there anyone who likes sinning and deliberately resolves in his heart to sin? Neither those who believe nor those who do not believe sin by

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deliberately resolving to do so. All sin because they are weak, and they sin because they are lacking. If we had the ability not to sin until we die, it would be right for us to do God's work without sinning. But as we live, greed arises; as we live, feelings rise up, and we end up cursing and fighting, now loving and now hating—that is how it goes.

Among those who do not believe in that salvation of Jesus by the water and the blood, in the remission of sins, there are those who slander the righteous who have received the remission of sins, saying, "You were saved by believing like that, so then, even though you are so lacking, the Lord has removed even your future sins, hasn't He? If you believe that and say that it is the glory of God, then you will deliberately sin more. You will deliberately sin even more so that the glory of God may be revealed all the more, won't you?" But sin is not something one commits more or does not commit by resolving to. Human beings sin unintentionally because they are weak. They do not sin by deliberately resolving to.

In the Old Testament, it says that when a person sinned unintentionally and realized his fault, that is, that he had sinned, he brought an unblemished lamb or goat before God, laid his hands on it to pass on his sins, cut its throat, caught the blood, and handed it over to the priest; then the priest put the blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and poured the rest at the base of the altar of burnt offering, and next cut the animal into pieces, burned the unclean parts outside the camp, and burned the fat on the altar of burnt offering, and thus offered the sacrifice to God. Therefore, it says that when the priest offered the sacrifice for him, the person who had sinned unintentionally received the remission of sins.

The sins people commit are all sins committed unintentionally. Whether one planned them or not, whether one

committed them knowingly or unknowingly, they are all sins committed unintentionally out of weakness. It is not as though one draws up some five-year plan and says, “I am going to do this no matter what.”

Think back for a moment on the sins you and I have committed until now. You have sinned until now, but did you sin after making a plan, saying, “Ten years from now I am going to do this no matter what”? No, you did not. You simply sinned as you lived. Our Lord has removed all those sins. Even now, in this age, sinners who are not born again slander the righteous who are born again, saying, “You who have received the remission of sins will deliberately sin recklessly so that the glory of God may be revealed all the more. You will resolve to sin even more.” Dear fellow believers, isn’t that so?

Truly, if the apostle Paul had not written down this part when he wrote this Book of Romans, people would have thought that all these words were something we made up. But it was the same in the days of the apostle Paul. About two thousand years ago, too, the apostle Paul clearly preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, saying, “I am lacking like this, but our Lord bore even my future sins by receiving baptism from John in the Jordan River, died on the Cross in my place, and saved me from all sins, and He saved not only me but all who believe from sin. There is no sin in this world. Those who believe are saved.” But even then, those who did not believe slandered in that way the apostle Paul and the people of God who had heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit from the apostle Paul.

If we put ourselves in their place, it seems we could understand. Those who slander, even though they believe in Jesus, still have sin and are always afraid, yet we, reading the very same Bible, say that we have no sin, so they feel as though we would say we have no sin even after killing someone, and

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that frightens them. That is the limit of man's narrow thinking, and it is a misunderstanding. Because the Bible says, *"Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20)*, those people think that the righteous will deliberately sin recklessly, and so instead they are reluctant to mix with us in the same faith and slander us where they cannot be seen.

Complete salvation by faith

Because we are holy, because we have no sin, we rather try not to sin. We have received this holiness from our God. But we have flesh. As the word says, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6)*, the flesh still goes toward what the flesh wants, but even so, we who are born again often exercise restraint and self-control.

The spirit is still spirit. We have been saved by faith. Our hearts have been saved through faith. That is why we praise God with our hearts, and even while we call our flesh a body of death when we look at it, we instead praise our Lord, who saved us from all these sins, from this body of death. We believe and give thanks. We are thankful for Jesus' salvation. And toward those who slander us, we have a heart of pity.

To those who misunderstand and slander us with words like "You will resolve to sin more on purpose so that the glory of God may be revealed," we the righteous say, "You misunderstand us. Your thinking is a misunderstanding. It is wrong thinking."

Dear fellow believers, people in this age do not understand. They do not understand the word that says, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6)*. It means that flesh is flesh. The flesh still loves the

flesh, and the spirit still loves the holiness of God. That is why our spirit, our heart, follows after that righteousness of God, after salvation. Our spirit believes that God, having a heart that loves us, sent His Son to this earth and had Him clothed in human flesh, passed all our sins on to His Son, judged His Son in our place, and so saved us.

We are saved through faith. The spirit is saved through faith, and the flesh still loves the flesh even after we have been saved. Until Jesus comes again and this body is changed in a moment, transformed into a spiritual body that transcends time and space, into a spirit body, the flesh is still flesh.

It is because sinners who are not yet born again do not quite understand the saying that flesh is flesh—just as a person who liked spicy food before being born again still likes spicy food after being born again, and a person who liked sweet food still likes sweet food after being born again.

People thought that only when we are born again and this flesh, too, is changed in a moment so that we become people who do not sin at all, could we say, "I have been saved; I have no sin." Because they thought of salvation, a matter of the spirit, in terms of the flesh like this, they could not understand it. But spirit is spirit, and the flesh sins until it dies.

The apostle Paul, too, said, *"Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)*, and this means that the flesh truly goes against God's will and wants to do what it likes, and does not do what pleases God. The flesh is flesh until it dies. Our having been saved by accepting in our hearts by faith that salvation of Jesus by the water and the blood means that our spirit has been saved; it does not mean that our flesh has now been completely saved.

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On the sins we still commit after being born again

Our flesh will be changed in a moment on the last day, at the time when our Lord comes to this earth as the Lord of the second coming, and be transformed into a spiritual body just like the body of our God. At that time this flesh, too, will not sin. But now it sins. That is why people who are not born again, confused and unable to grasp this word, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6)*, think, when we say that we are righteous or that we have no sin, "How can you have no sin when you sin? If you sin, you have sin, don't you?"

Dear fellow believers, if we think according to the flesh, it is certainly right to say that this flesh sins and therefore has sin. And since it will keep on sinning in the future, it is right to say that it has sin. But think according to the spirit. Even the sins we will commit in the future—our Lord came about two thousand years ago and removed all the sins of you and me, people of two thousand years later; and if our Lord comes late, even the sins of people who will be born billions of years from now, the sins of all people until the day the world ceases to exist, Jesus has taken away all of them.

So what sin is there? Dear fellow believers, in our hearts we can go to the moon even right now. The heart can ride a time machine and go back to the old days even right now. The heart can go back even now to that time long ago when we lay on a straw mat spread on the floor. And it can come right back again. And it can go to the future and come back. This heart is like that. That moon is so far away, but to the heart it is very close. The heart is even faster than light.

I have already been to the moon and back just now. It did not even take one second. Our Lord is Spirit. He is God. He is a holy

Spirit. God, who is Spirit, clothed Himself in human flesh for a while in order to save mankind. Our God is Spirit; He is the eternal One, the God of infinite power who is not bound by any constraint of time and space. He set His heart on removing the sins of us who would live about two thousand years later. And He received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River.

And at that time He bore all the sins of this world. And three years later He received the judgment in His own body on the Cross. And so He completely saved mankind, all people, from sin. God had such a heart, and He did not merely have the heart; in order to actually save us, He came to this earth clothed in flesh, bore all the sin of mankind on His own flesh, and by receiving the judgment in His own flesh, He saved mankind from sin and made us without sin.

Because God is Spirit, it was possible for Him to make us without sin. So it is because they cannot discern and cannot understand this word, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6)*, that many people in this age cannot receive the remission of sins. Do you all understand? If one thinks about and believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with a spirit that seeks the Lord, with the heart, one can understand it all and accept it and one's sins disappear; but if one does not know one's own self and thinks only in a fleshly way, one cannot possibly understand it—such is this mystery of Christ. The world of the spirit is the unseen world of the heart, and it really exists. If one thinks with the heart, it can by all means become good news worth accepting.

Dear fellow believers, we have been saved. We have been saved by believing in our hearts in what the eternal Savior has done. So we have no sin. We have become righteous. But that does not mean we resolve to sin. Because our flesh is lacking,

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we may sin again. But in our hearts we never have any desire to sin on purpose. Isn't that so?

Even after being born again, perhaps when your faith is young, do not think, just because your flesh sins, "Oh dear, I guess I love sin." That is fleshly thinking. In fact, our hearts do not love sin. In our hearts we are truly holy at all times. We are clean. We do not love sin. It is just that our flesh drags our hearts along.

People who do not know the truth

It asked whether people's not believing would make God's salvation without effect, and it is not made without effect. Second, those who say, "Then you will recklessly sin more as you please so that the righteousness of God and the glory of God may be revealed," are people who do not know the truth. If such people slander like that and claim to believe in Jesus only by the flesh, it is fitting for them to be condemned. They must go to hell. They must become sinners. They must receive judgment. They must suffer destruction. They will be thrown into that unquenchable pit of fire teeming with maggots. They will gnash their teeth and grieve forever.

We have been saved. We have received the remission of sins. But there are those who slander us endlessly. Have pity on such people. Teach them the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Show them mercy. Dear fellow believers, we are saved by faith. What kind of faith? It is believing in God's faithful and trustworthy word, that He spoke in the Old Testament and came in the New Testament and fulfilled it all. We have been saved by believing that God promised long ago and carried out exactly what He had promised. Who has a faith as faithful and certain as this?

If one believes in Jesus as one's own Savior, it is salvation, and if one does not believe, it is hell. People who are not born again are free to say to us who are born again, "You will sin more for the glory of God." They can say so as they please, but on the last day when Jesus Christ comes, when they die and go before God, they will receive the judgment, "You are a sinner," and go to hell.

I hope you will believe now, at this time, while there is still the gospel of the water and the Spirit, while there is still the church, while there are still the servants of God and the saints. I hope you will believe and receive the remission of sins. I hope you will first have your own soul saved and then preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others. While you yourself are a sinner, why on earth do you shout at others to believe in Jesus? Why do you make them believe in a Jesus of whom they say, "Even though I believe, I am a sinner; I am in agony day after day"? I give thanks before the Lord, who has saved us. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The way of peace opened to us who were under sin

< Romans 3:9–18 >

“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.’ ‘Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit’; The poison of asps is under their lips; ‘Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.’ ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’”

Our original place, which we must know before measuring others

When we hear of someone’s wrongdoing, we immediately compare ourselves with that person. The thought comes, “I did not go that far, so am I not a bit better?” But can that comparison make us right before God as well? The apostle Paul said, *“We have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin” (Romans 3:9)*. This means that whether they are Jews, who received the word of God first, or Gentiles, who did not,

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when they stand before God in their original state, they are all under sin. Even though we are now righteous people who have received the remission of sins, it is not because we were born from the start with a better character than others that we became righteous.

Paul went on to say, *"As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)*. The words "as it is written" are a sign that Paul is quoting the word of the Old Testament Psalms, so this word speaks of the original state of man before the Lord came. Therefore, this is not a word saying that sin remains in those who believe even after the Lord has remitted their sins, but a word saying that among those who were born as descendants of Adam and have not yet met the Lord, there is not a single righteous person. By nature, man cannot become righteous by his own deeds, but he becomes righteous by believing in the righteousness of God. So before this word we must neither insist on our own greatness nor deny the remission of sins we have received from the Lord. We must distinguish between our original state and the result of Jesus' saving us, and if we who were under sin have become righteous, the reason lies not in us but in the Lord, who removed our sins. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had the sins of us who were under sin passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, and rose again from death. One becomes righteous not by being a better person by nature, but by believing in this work.

Knowing our original place does not take away the joy of having been saved; rather, it makes clearer the grace that the Lord accepted us, who had no righteousness to boast of. If we think we were saved because we sinned less than others, our assurance of salvation is shaken when our own shortcomings are revealed; but if we know that the One who made us righteous is

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Jesus, we no longer make the highs and lows of our own deeds the basis of salvation.

There is no answer of salvation in a heart that has turned aside to its own thoughts

A person under sin is in the dark even about realizing his own sins. This is because, while he remembers the wrong he did, he regards his own heart that produces that wrong as fine, and he shields himself by saying that if the circumstances had been different he would not have done so. The word that there is none who seeks after God is also connected with this heart. As long as a person believes his own judgment is right, he looks only for words that will support his own thoughts rather than listening to God's judgment, so only when God reveals our sins through His word do we come to know that we need salvation.

"They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12). This word shows the direction of that heart. Because they do not rely on what God has done but follow their own thoughts and cravings, they are unprofitable in God's sight, and no righteousness to present before God arises in them. Even in a heart that boasts of having helped others, is there not mixed in a craving to be recognized or an expectation of getting something in return? Helping people is a necessary thing, but one cannot claim that even one's sins have disappeared on the basis of good deeds that are like an insurance policy taken out for oneself. The word that they are unprofitable is not telling us to regard the lives of others as worthless; it is a word telling us to acknowledge that the ones who must first stand before that word are we ourselves, and that the answer that gives us life is

not within us. That answer came from outside us. Jesus bore, through the baptism He received from John, even the sin of the heart that did good for its own benefit, and because of that sin He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place. We must abandon the expectation that sins will be erased if we pile up good deeds, and come to the Lord, who has remitted our sins in this way.

The sin revealed in a life lived only for the flesh

Paul further reveals, through the way people live, why the answer of salvation is not within us. He said, *"Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit; The poison of asps is under their lips" (Romans 3:13)*. In the word that their throat is an open tomb, there is the picture of a life that does not eat in order to live but lives in order to eat, and in the end meets death. If one makes feeding and satisfying the flesh the whole of life, whatever more one gains, one does not gain the way to escape sin and death. This does not mean that eating is wrong; it is a word saying that a life that pursues only the needs of the flesh cannot save the soul.

A heart so turned aside toward its own benefit is revealed in the tongue and the lips as well. It tries to protect its gain even by hiding the facts, and while speaking gently on the outside, it harbors the intent to harm the other person. Cursing and bitterness do not stay only in the heart but flow out in words and torment others, and the word that their feet are swift to shed blood makes us realize that sin does not stop at thought but proceeds to actions that harm people. Since God knows the heart that hated and pushed others away in order to achieve its own will, one cannot exempt oneself from this word merely on the

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grounds that one has never actually made anyone shed blood. Even after receiving the remission of sins, when the shortcomings of the flesh are revealed, we must not hide that wrong but acknowledge it. For our thankfulness that the Lord has saved us cannot become an excuse to make light of the pain we have caused others.

His speaking of the forms of sin one by one is not so that we may find out the sins of others better. It is to make us stop the heart that thought it was enough to correct only visible actions, and to make us look at our own inner self, from which such actions come. Because I know that I cannot remove with my own strength the sin that comes from within, I need the Savior. Both the sins committed with the tongue, the lips, and the feet, and the sin in the heart from which those sins came, Jesus had all passed on to Him, together with all the sins of the world, through the baptism He received from John; He shed His blood on the Cross to pay their price, and He rose again from death. That is why this news is precious to us.

The way of peace is in the Lord, who has remitted our sins

The word that destruction and misery are in the way that follows sin shows where that way leads. Because even if one gets what one wants right away, God's judgment on sin does not disappear through a person's success, Paul said, *"The way of peace they have not known" (Romans 3:17)*. How can there be peace when there is sin in the heart? Since a person cannot wash away his sins by himself, he cannot obtain the peace to stand before God merely by changing the circumstances of the flesh, and without someone to preach the righteousness of God to him,

he cannot even know that way on his own. The last word, *"There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18)*, reveals the root of this way. Because they put their own judgment first rather than acknowledging and fearing God, even while walking the way of sin they did not realize the need to turn back to the Savior.

To us who were like this, God the Father sent His Son Jesus. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sins we commit throughout our whole lives, transferred to Him once and for all. Because of those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the judgment for sin that we were to receive, and by rising again from death He saved us from all sins. And He gave the Holy Spirit to our hearts, which have received the remission of sins, as the evidence of it. Because we believe in our hearts in Jesus, who has actually remitted our sins, we have left the place where we were under sin and become righteous. The Lord's salvation does not turn into something unfinished because of the shortcomings that will be revealed in the future. Because there is the Lord, who bore even those sins and received the judgment, we can rely on the remission of sins we have already received even while acknowledging our wrongs.

This peace does not mean that every hardship we go through in life disappears; it comes from the fact that, because the Lord has remitted all our sins, we have come to stand before God as people without sin. How thankful we are that the Lord has opened the way of peace that we could not find by our own strength! Now, even when we look at a person who is under sin, we must not forget our original place. Since the way of peace is a way that cannot be known on one's own without someone to preach it, we who have met the Lord must become the ones who preach it to that person. Because we have received the love of the Lord, who had pity on us, we come to want to preach the

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word of the remission of sins to that person as well. Let us look back on the heart that, at the beginning, asked, “Am I not a bit better?” as it heard of the wrongs of others. If we have anything to boast of, it is not a better self of ours, but Jesus, who saved us who were under sin and gave us peace. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

True salvation is by faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Romans 3:9–31 >

“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.’ ‘Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit’; ‘The poison of asps is under their lips’; ‘Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.’ ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short

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of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

Faith in the absolute truth and the real condition of people under sin

This word tells us that we are made righteous by faith that believes in the true righteousness of God, that is, that we have received the remission of sins by the law of faith, which is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has become the righteousness of God. Christians today put more weight on having their own faith recognized by keeping the law of God than on being made perfect by believing in the word of God. But in the Old Testament, the fathers of faith testified that one is saved from sin by believing in the righteousness of God. It means that we receive the remission of sins and go to the kingdom of heaven by believing in the gospel of the water and

the Spirit, and that since we receive rewards only by faith, we must always live by faith. The fathers of faith emphasized the importance of faith in this way and said that we must live by faith.

The Lord has paved for us the way by which we can go to the kingdom of heaven, but in order for us to discover that way, we must believe in the truth God has spoken. That way is to be discovered only by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In other words, it means that we obtain the kingdom of heaven only by the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we must know that faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the faith in the absolute truth that is absolutely necessary in the Christian faith. We must have in our hearts this faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we must live by this faith until the day we go before the Lord. Do you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now? If you and I have the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we will know well how important this faith is to us. Since we cannot be saved without the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this can be called absolute faith. To emphasize once again, this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word of absolute truth that is absolutely necessary for us to receive the remission of sins. I will also state clearly what we must believe. It is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us.

Now let us look at being saved from sin by faith that believes in the word of God, at the faith that is recognized before God, and at receiving blessings before God, both spiritual and physical, by faith. God has said that people are saved from sin

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by believing in the righteousness of God. Therefore, in order to be saved, we must first of all know what kind of beings we fundamentally are. After that, we must examine whether we are holding a wrong faith that tries to be justified by works instead of the right faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we must know what kind of faith is the wrong faith of works.

The apostle Paul said, *"What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin" (Romans 3:9)*. Among the people of this world, can we say that one person is right and another is wrong? No, we cannot. The apostle Paul wrote about the sin of man in Romans chapter 1. Though people know God, they fail to serve God; though they know that God created the heavens and the earth and all things, they do not fear God, do not serve Him, and do not believe in Him. Also, though they do know God, they do not glorify Him, nor do they give thanks to God. Man's thoughts are futile, man's heart is very filthy, man's head, though professing to be wise, is very foolish and stupid, and man's breast desires to burn with the love of God but is only storing up the wrath of God. This is because it has happened just as the word *"and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (Romans 1:23)* says.

Many people live before God not according to faith but according to the lusts of their own flesh. So they regard created things as more precious than the Creator and serve them. They live always doing shameful things before God, and that is the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which will receive great retribution in the future. God says that because of that sin they will receive retribution in this life and also receive retribution in the life to come. In particular, God spoke about the Jews, and

when it was asked whether the Jews were better than the Gentiles because they had the law, He said that this was not so either. God said that Jews and Gentiles alike are all a seed of evildoers whose deeds are corrupt before God, and that they are truly those who will suffer wrath before God.

The word says, *"As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one'" (Romans 3:10–12)*. Paul is quoting the word of the Old Testament and saying it once again. Jesus Christ came to this earth, bore the sin of the world on His own body by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved all mankind. Therefore, before that salvation came, there was not a single person without sin, and naturally there was not one person who was right either. Was there really a righteous person without sin in this world? Was there anyone whose good deeds deserved to be recognized before God? There was not a single one. And were there those who realized that they themselves were truly not right and sought after God? It means that until now there have been no such people. Until now there has been no one in this world who does good; there have been only those who all turned aside most unprofitably, lived lives of utter vanity, and passed away.

If we look at the word that follows, we can clearly know what God has said about man. It says, *"'Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit'; 'The poison of asps is under their lips'; 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.' 'Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.' 'There is no fear of God before their eyes'" (Romans 3:13–18)*. When it is asked whether people eat to live or live to

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eat, it is no exaggeration to say that countless people live to eat and then die. A person eats because he was born, eats in order to live, and then at some point is living in order to eat. God has said that human life is like this, coming to live differently from its purpose.

And man always tells lies with his tongue. Why is that? It is because man was born as a descendant of Adam, the first ancestor of sin, that he lies instinctively. Because sin entered man through Adam's offense, man is born with sin from birth and always tells lies with his tongue. Since man's nature is sinful, he always deceives with his tongue. Moreover, man even has the ignorance of not knowing that he is a deceiver. In a way, human life is one in which a person deceives others and deceives himself while living without even knowing that he is doing so. It means that because man has sin in his heart, he comes to speak venomous words, follow his instincts, and live doing evil. Man is extraordinarily clever at committing sins and very quick with his hands and feet at harming others. So people commit offenses because of their sin, and because of their offenses they live embracing misery with destruction right before their eyes. And then, though they live not knowing the way of peace because of their sins, they do not try to know the way to be saved, and they live without fundamentally fearing God at all. God says that all people who have sin live by instinct like that, no different from beasts.

It is written in the Bible, *"As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (Romans 5:19)*. Adam and Eve were the first human beings God made. It means that because those people sinned against God, their descendants were also born with sin. That is why man lives by instinct like a beast. It is instinct to oppress the weak when one is strong and to seek revenge when one is wronged, and acting according to this

instinct is the characteristic of people who have sin. The descendants of Adam, who were born with sin, are all bound to live like that if they do not receive the remission of sins. If a person wants to live like a human being and not like a beast, he must be saved by believing in Jesus Christ, receive the Holy Spirit in his heart, and be governed by the Holy Spirit. Before receiving the Holy Spirit, everyone is a seed of evildoers who follows his instincts, and so he cannot help but commit evil. Therefore, everyone born into this world as a descendant of Adam is one who must receive the remission of sins.

Realize your sins through the law and seek the Savior

To those who live with sin and can only go to hell, our God said that He had given the law to make them know their sins. God gave His commandments to people who know God yet do not acknowledge God, have no fear of God, and do not glorify God, and that is the law. The word says, *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19)*. God gave the law to let people see properly what man is like. Through this law God gave, people come to realize what kind of sinners they are. If a person realizes that it is fitting for him to fall into the fiery pit of hell because of his sins, would not anyone set out to seek a Savior? God gave us His law because He wanted you to realize your sins and come to seek the Savior. If you have come to know your sins through the law, you must now look to Jesus, who bore those sins. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He

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received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and He rose again from death and became the Savior.

God gave the law, telling us that this is how we are to live. It is right for man to live according to the commandments of God—you shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet what belongs to others—but he is one who cannot live that way. Everything God has commanded is right, but there is no one who can keep it and stand boldly before God as a person without sin. That is why the word says, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)*.

By giving the law to people, God gave an exact standard concerning the question "How should man live?" but He also made them realize, "I am a sinner who cannot live according to this standard." Through the word of the law God has given us, we only come to realize the goodness of God and our own sinfulness. Because we cannot keep the law, we come to know that we ourselves are a seed of evildoers who commit sin, and we come to admit, "I am truly one who is to go to hell." If it were done according to God's commandments, according to God's righteous law, it is a self-evident truth that we would receive the judgment for our sins and be destroyed. It means that the law of God makes us realize this utmost fact. In other words, through the law a person not only comes to know how man should live, but also comes to realize even this: "How great a sinner I am." But what we realize through the law goes only that far. We cannot be saved by the law. This is because through the law we only reach the point of knowing that we ourselves are those who cannot live perfectly according to the commandments of God.

Man cannot keep the commandments of God perfectly. This is because man has no ability to keep the word of God. So anyone who was born as a human being, without exception, is a sinner, every single one. Those who believe in Jesus, know the law of God, and try to live following the commandments of God, and those who do not try, are all sinners alike. God is saying this through the law. The people of the world are sinners from the moment they are born as human beings, and in hoping for the salvation of God, it is essential to realize that one is a sinner. This is because only those who know that they are sinners seek the salvation of God.

God gave His commandments to us, who were born with sin, and taught us that we are human beings who commit sin before God. After we come to know that we are sinners, we lament, "Then what shall we do?" This is because if one has sin, one must go to hell. When anyone realizes that he is one who must suffer destruction and misery and go to hell because of his sins, he cannot help but become afraid. This is not only because of going to hell in the life to come, but also because it is clear that even in this present life, with the spiritual eyes of his heart darkened, his thoughts darkened, and his wisdom darkened, he will suffer the agony of destruction. Then what should a person who has realized that he needs a Savior do now? He must seek the One who will save him from all this suffering. We know well that the suffering we now undergo on this earth and all the suffering we will undergo before God in the future are what we deserve. Therefore, the fact that we must undergo all that suffering in full in this life and in the life to come is so sad, so frightening, and so terrifying. That is why a person comes to long for a Savior who will save him from this fear, suffering, and sorrow caused by sin. "Truly, man must have a Savior. Who is the Savior who will save us?" Now we must become seekers

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who set out to find the Savior who will save us from all our sins. The salvation that will deliver us from that fear is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore once and for all not only the sins that would have brought us to judgment but all the sins of the world, and after paying the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, He rose again from death.

The religions of the world, too, arose from agonizing over whether there is no way to escape the problem of birth, aging, sickness, and death, which man fundamentally has from birth, and from searching for a way to escape it. In other words, religion means seeking a way to be saved from all one's sins and setting out to find a savior who will save. But there was no true salvation in religion. And religion could not lead people to meet the true Savior either. This is because true salvation is in God, who made the world.

Jesus Christ, the Savior witnessed by the Old Testament

God did not give only the law. The word says, *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets" (Romans 3:21)*. God has revealed the righteousness of God. He saved us, who could only go to hell because of sin, from sin and made us children of God. It means that in order to let us enter the kingdom of God and live happily forever, God saved all mankind through His Son Jesus Christ, and He has revealed that righteous work to us. The Savior of all mankind is none other than Jesus Christ, in whom we believe.

Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, was crucified and died, and rose again from death, and so saved us. He is truly the Savior. Thus true salvation has come to those who believe in this Savior, Jesus Christ. In other words, it means that we are saved by the faith that believes in the righteous work Jesus Christ did. We are saved by faith! We are justified by faith! We obtain eternal life by faith! We are blessed by faith! Have you realized why we must know and believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior? Because man is engulfed in sin, he is always lacking and weak and needs a Savior who will set him free from this sin, and therefore we must know and believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior who has truly saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

How much do people agonize over birth, aging, sickness, and death, which are fundamental to human beings? God did not leave us, who were agonizing, as we were. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth. It means that as Jesus Christ, who was sent by God, saved us with the water and the blood, God revealed salvation to us. Therefore, we must know Jesus Christ as our Savior and receive true salvation by believing in the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He has given us. When we believe, "God has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit," we come to find the clue to our problem of birth, aging, sickness, and death.

In order for us to grasp the thread-end of salvation in the tangled skein of life, we must first of all realize how sinful we are. The law says that we must live rightly before God, but it is clear that we are those who cannot live according to that law, so it means that we must realize that we are those who need to believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We ought to live rightly according to the will of God, but the word says "*through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus*

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death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12), and this means that we were sinners from birth and, since we always sin, are those who will come to death. We, who cannot live according to the law, are beings who would surely have to die as sinners if there were no One to save us. But since the word says *"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),* we could know that God has given us one Savior. He is none other than Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ was the One witnessed by the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament.

In order to save us, who had fallen into sin, from sin, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth as the Savior. That Savior saved us in a most righteous way. Let us read the word. *"Even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:22–24).* Jesus Christ is the very Savior of whom the prophets spoke in the books of the law of the Old Testament. In other words, He is the one and only Savior of the world whom God the Father promised to send to mankind. Just as in the Old Testament the sacrificial offering received the laying on of hands, had all the sins of a person passed on to it, and died, and so removed that person's sins, Jesus Christ was sent to this earth by God the Father, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross and received death for our sins in our place, and rose again from death, and so became our eternal Savior. Since Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John and, receiving that judgment in our place, paid the price of sin with the blood He shed on the

Cross, we believe in that righteous salvation revealed through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Look at that righteous salvation that our Savior Jesus Christ has carried out for us. We receive true salvation through faith in that Jesus Christ. To put it more precisely, it means that we truly obtain true salvation by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He has given us. Do you know Jesus Christ as the Savior, and have you obtained true salvation by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which He has removed our sins?

In the righteousness of God there is no difference among those who believe

The righteousness of God refers to the righteousness that has delivered all mankind from the sin of the world. All mankind, without a single exception, inherited sin from their ancestors. And because of that sin, they commit sins. Thus all mankind could only suffer because of the sin they are born with and the sins they commit while living, and then go to hell. God had pity on such people and loved them so tremendously that He gave up even His own Son and saved them. It means that God sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth, had Him receive baptism from John the Baptist and have all sins passed on to Him, had Him hang on the Cross and die shedding His blood, and had Him rise again from death, and so made Jesus Christ our perfect and eternal Savior. Therefore, we receive the remission of sins through faith in Jesus Christ, who has become our Savior. “Jesus Christ truly received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so became our Savior. And He lives from now to eternity. Through faith in Him we come to

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receive as a gift the salvation by which God has saved us." It means that by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which God has saved us, we become sinless children of God. Since God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth, and Jesus received baptism from John, died, and rose again from death, and so saved us, we obtain salvation through faith by truly giving thanks in our hearts for that salvation accomplished in this way and gladly accepting it. This is true salvation.

The apostle Paul said, *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)*. As he said, there is no one in this world who does not sin. Since all mankind was born with sin from birth, they commit infinite sins while living on this earth. Borrowing the mouth of the apostle Paul, God went on to say to us, *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)*. The expression "the grace of God" refers to the gift God has given us, and so it means that we have been justified freely. Our being made sinless is truly the greatest gift, given freely. Since we receive the remission of sins just by believing in our hearts in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has saved us from sin, this true salvation is the grace of graces given freely and the very greatest of all gifts. That is why, on God's part, He says that everyone who believes in the righteousness of that redemption, by which He sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth and saved us from sin, obtains salvation.

Peter confessed as follows. *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. Although the Lord came to this earth clothed in human flesh, the Lord is God and the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven. Moreover, He is the Prophet, the King of kings, and truly the one and only King of the whole universe in this world. There was only one single reason why such a One came to this earth clothed in a lowly body. It was to

remove the sin of mankind, who live pitifully in this world because of sin.

When it is said that we obtain salvation through faith in the righteousness of God, salvation seems very easy. Of course, on man's part, salvation may be regarded as easy because one obtains salvation only by believing in the righteousness of God, but on God's part, how much labor He went through! On our part, we are simply saved if we believe in Jesus, but on Jesus Christ's part, He had to sacrifice His own body to redeem us. On man's part, one obtains salvation merely by knowing Jesus Christ as one's Savior and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He gave, but on the part of God the Father and Jesus Christ, people can be made to obtain salvation only when our sins are removed, and so, just as God promised from the beginning, He sent Jesus as the sacrificial offering, had Him undergo a tremendous sacrifice, paid off all the price of man's sins, and so let us be saved and redeemed us to His side. God used the word "redemption" because He bought us by giving His own Son and paying the price of sin. We can know that labor and sacrifice exactly from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus' having all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all was what He did through the baptism He received from John, and His receiving the judgment for those sins in our place was what He did by shedding His blood on the Cross. This salvation, which Jesus accomplished by rising again from death, we have received freely.

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Redemption, by which He paid the price and bought us

In the old days, powerful nations made slaves of the native peoples of the continents of Africa and America, and bought and sold the people they had enslaved in markets. So in those old days, the markets where slaves were auctioned were very active. Because there were many who wanted to buy slaves, there were also many who wanted to sell slaves, and many people were dragged in as slaves, so the slave market was crowded with people. A slave dragged in with shackles on his feet and arms was nothing more than goods bought and sold in the market and was not treated as a human being with dignity. Someone brings out a slave and puts him up for auction. In order to sell his slave at a high price, he shouts out the slave's strong points and shows the slave's condition in detail to those who want to buy. Those who want to buy a slave examine closely whether the slave is injured anywhere or whether he has any disease. When the auction begins and a slave they like comes up, they raise their hands to signal that they will buy, and they call out the amount they will pay, raising it little by little. The one who calls the highest price pays that price and receives that slave.

Redemption means paying a price to buy and save someone, and it means that God paid the price and bought us, who were slaves of sin, and redeemed us as children of God. The word says, *"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)*. It means that God the Father paid the price in order to save us from sin, make us children of God, and give us everlasting life. His sacrificing His own Son was that price. It means that God sent His Son to this earth, passed the sin of mankind on to His Son, had His Son nailed to the Cross and

shed His blood, had Him be despised, had Him come to death, and then made Him rise again from that death, and so saved you and me who believe this.

Whoever believes in Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, as his Savior, and accepts in his heart and believes that Jesus Christ came to this earth and accomplished our salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is born again. This is because God has removed all that person's sins and made him a child of God. On God's part, He paid the price and saved us, and on our part, we obtain true salvation by believing in our hearts in the love of God the Father and Jesus Christ and in the salvation by which He saved us. That He made it possible for us to become righteous by faith alone in this way is the righteousness of God and the love of God, by which God has saved us. In the redemption we accept in our hearts, there is the fact that the price of sin was paid. Jesus, who had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross in order to be judged for those sins. Since by rising again from death He has let us live as children, we receive this redemption in our hearts.

Just as cogwheels mesh together and turn, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a precise salvation in which every part fits together exactly. God the Father paid the price with His Son Jesus Christ and redeemed us. He bought us by giving up His Son, cleansed our sins by the sacrifice of His Son, removed our sins and let us escape judgment through His Son, and raised His Son again and so accomplished the eternal salvation of all mankind. In this way God set up Jesus Christ as the Savior. All mankind has come to be saved from sin and obtain eternal life by believing in Jesus Christ, the Son whom God the Father gave to this earth, as their own true Savior.

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Do you believe that God the Father has saved us through His Son Jesus Christ? We obtain salvation by believing in Jesus Christ, by believing in the love of God, and by believing in the righteous work by which God has saved us. Now, by believing in that salvation in which He bore our sins and paid the price of sin, we have been saved from all sins and redeemed by Him. You and I have become children of God by faith, have become people without sin, and have become people who have obtained eternal life. In everything, it is through faith that we obtain a reversed outcome. You and I could only go to hell because of sin and could only receive an eternal curse. All we could get on this earth was nothing but destruction and misery. We could only live such a miserable, cursed life and then pass away, but God the Father has reversed our lives through His Son. It means that God has made us glorious children of God, made us people without sin, given us a glorious status, and blessed us to live a glorious life. Faith, then, is something extremely important. This is because we obtain all the blessings God has given us through faith. It is because our lives, which had been cursed, have been changed into blessed lives through faith.

The kingdom of heaven that the violent take by force

It is said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the violent. The word says, *"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12)*, and here, this violence refers to faith. It says that from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and that the violent take it by force. The kingdom of heaven is a place where only people

without sin go and live. Yet the violent take such a kingdom of heaven by force? Violence means seizing by force, so does it mean that one possesses the kingdom of heaven just as a robber enters someone else's house and takes what is in that house? Yes, it does. It is because we had sin and could only go to hell and could not go to the kingdom of heaven, but since John the Baptist passed the sin of mankind on to Jesus Christ, we possess the kingdom of heaven by faith as if seizing it by force. Because Jesus Christ, bearing the sin of the world, went to the Cross and was nailed to it, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death, and so became the Savior who saved us, we obtain the qualification to enter the kingdom of heaven by believing in the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the righteousness of God. Those who believe have obtained the qualification, and those who do not yet believe must obtain the qualification by believing in their hearts.

Many people find this word puzzling. They doubt how the Bible, which is the word of God recording only what is right and proper, could use such words, and whether it has been mistranslated. But this word does not depart from the original text. Just as a robber makes what belongs to another his own in an instant, we, who are deficient beings who cannot help but sin, have come to possess the kingdom of heaven as if we had seized it by force, by purely believing in the word that God the Father has remitted our sins through His Son. The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who have taken it by force through faith. You have obtained salvation and possessed the kingdom of heaven by believing in your hearts in what God has done. Looking at this word of the Bible, I believe in my heart, "John the Baptist passed all the sin of mankind on to Jesus Christ by baptizing Him, and Jesus Christ had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and so He bore the sin

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of the world, went to the Cross, and saved us." What Jesus Christ did exactly as God had said comes to mind, and I believe it in my heart just as it is.

It is said that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and that the violent take it by force. Some may raise the question, "God guards the kingdom of heaven, so how can it suffer violence? Does God have no power?" Jesus Christ said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. It means that Jesus Christ did not allow just anyone to take the kingdom of heaven by force, but perfectly paved the way of salvation with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made it so that one can take it by force only through that way. Only those who believe that He bore all our sins on His own body by receiving baptism from John, went to the Cross and was nailed to it, shed His blood, and rose again from death, and so paid the full price, can possess the kingdom of heaven. Jesus did not merely bear all our sins and come to death; He rose again. So He is now seated beside the throne of God, and He has given the qualification to enter the kingdom of heaven to all who believe in the merit of the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. Do you understand why God said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to the violent?

The word says, *"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 11:13–14)*. Because the word of the Bible is the word of truth and a spiritual word, those who do not know the whole Bible cannot interpret such a word of God. In other words, it means that those who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not understand the word of God. This is because the word of God is unraveled one by one through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

It is written, *"All the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matthew 11:13)*. John the Baptist was born into this world six months before Jesus was born. Before Jesus Christ came, God made promises through the prophets, and that is the Old Testament. Jesus Christ fulfilled those promises in the New Testament, and the one who was with Him at that time was none other than John the Baptist. Jesus Christ received baptism from John according to the promise of God in the Old Testament and went to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and the one who gave baptism to Jesus was none other than John the Baptist, the high priest. When Jesus Christ came to this earth as our Savior, there had to be a representative of mankind who would pass the sin of sinners on to Jesus Christ. It means that the representative of mankind who was thus set up was none other than John the Baptist, the greatest among those born of women. That is why it is said that all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

God first sent John the Baptist, the high priest, and then sent Jesus Christ. And He had the two meet, so that Jesus received baptism from John and John gave baptism. Jesus had the sin of mankind passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and John the Baptist passed the sin of the world on to Jesus by giving Him baptism. Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again from death, and so became our Savior, and John the Baptist, who had passed the sin of the world on by giving baptism, testified of that Savior that He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. John is the last prophet of the Old Testament. Since it says, *"If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come" (Matthew 11:14)*, it means that the Elijah who was to come is none other than John the Baptist. It means that just as Elijah turned the entire people of Israel back to God, John the Baptist turned all sinners back to Jesus Christ.

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Why is that? It is because John the Baptist passed all the sin of mankind on to Jesus Christ by giving Him baptism. And it is because John the Baptist looked at Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*.

I believe that you now also know how God, on His part, has saved us. I believe you also agree that we need faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God the Father sent His Son to this earth and had Him bear all the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, had Him hang on the Cross and receive all the judgment in our place and cleanse us with His blood, and had Him rise again from death and give all the righteous the hope of being born again and of the resurrection. Now God has seated His Son Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all righteousness, at the right hand of His throne and is with Him forever. Now God is only waiting for you to believe and follow.

Our sins, already settled two thousand years ago

When was our salvation carried out? It was accomplished about two thousand years ago. On God's part, He had already saved us from all sins about two thousand years ago. God saved us through His Son. God saw even all the people who would be born into this world as sinners two thousand years after Jesus was born and accomplished the gospel of the water and the Spirit of the remission of sins, and who would live sinning and committing offenses, and He placed them within His plan. It means that since God is the omniscient and omnipotent One who lives forever, He remembers all these many people of the world, and He has arranged it so that even those who would be born about two thousand years after Jesus received baptism from John

would come to know that gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins through faith. In the eyes of God, who lives forever, a person born two thousand years before now has no sin, and a person who will be born two hundred years from now has no sin either. This is because God has saved them through His Son. He had His Son bear the sin of us human beings, and had His Son receive the judgment for sin and die and then rise again from death, and so saved us. It means that having done so, He passes over the sins of those who believe this. This is because God sees the sin of the world as something already completely settled.

That is why the word says, *"Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25)*. It means that He was set forth as a propitiation by His blood. Through the salvation that is in Jesus, through the redemption of God, through the grace of God, through the gift of salvation God has given us, He made it possible for everyone to be saved. On our part, we can be saved by believing in our hearts in what God has done. That is why, when God looks at you and me who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have no sin. It means that because God the Father has removed all our sins through His Son, He passes over our sins. Our sins are in fact a problem already settled. That is why our obtaining salvation through faith is a thoroughly right truth. In fact, we have obtained salvation through faith. Therefore, what we need is only faith, not our works.

Why do we obtain salvation by faith? It is because God the Father has demonstrated His own righteousness by saving us through His Son with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We obtain salvation by believing that fact. Are there times when you,

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too, want to show your righteousness? When you think something is the right thing, you want to do so, don't you? Think of a time when you did something good for someone. Let us say someone is racking his brains over cleaning his house. For his sake, you went into that room, cleared away all the trash, cleaned the whole room, and came out. And yet, perhaps because he has not gone into his room to look, he keeps worrying about cleaning the house. If you have done the right thing for him and he is agonizing without knowing it, would you not want to let him know that you have taken care of it all? In the same way, God the Father has saved us from all sins through His Son Jesus Christ, yet we do not know it. So how much God must want to reveal it! That is why God the Father revealed salvation through Jesus Christ and had those who had first received the remission of sins spread that salvation. God revealed through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He Himself is righteous and that those who believe in Jesus are also righteous, and He wanted to make known to the whole world the fact that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now have no sin. The salvation we must make known is also the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has already accomplished. It is to preach the fact that because Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, including even the sins we have committed today, He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death.

God has no sin. And those who believe in Jesus Christ, who came to this earth with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as the Savior have no sin. The word says, *"That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26)*. Because God Himself has no sin, He saved us in order to make us His own children and demonstrated His own

righteousness. Because the field of the heart of a person who knows and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has already been made clean, the word of God is planted well in that field of the heart.

Even after we are saved, the law stands firm as the standard

The word says, *"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:27–28)*. We have nothing to boast of by works. If there is anything to boast of, since we have obtained salvation by faith, it is faith that we boast of. It also says, *"There is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith" (Romans 3:30)*. We have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is to say, we have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Then who is the One who will accept that as true and acknowledge it? It is God. That God has come to you and me as the Holy Spirit.

Then is the law unnecessary for us in believing in Jesus? No, it is not. The word says, *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31)*. Because the commandments God has spoken are right, we come to know through that law that we are wrong. And we come to know that this law cannot make us sinless, and since through the law God has given we only come to know that we are sinners, we come to seek the true Savior. Therefore, through the law we come to go to Jesus Christ, and thus we have truly come to know, realize, and believe in the gospel of the water and

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the Spirit. That is why God said that once we have received the remission of sins, we are not to make void the law but to establish the law even more firmly. Through the commandments of God we came to know that we are truly sinners, and since we have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ, the law becomes even firmer. It was so before, it is so now, and it will be so in the future. Whether our deeds are right or wrong is judged exactly when they are seen in the light of the word of the law. Even when we come to know our shortcomings through the law, the basis of salvation is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rose again from death, the salvation He has already accomplished is not shaken because of the shortcomings of our deeds.

We obtain salvation by faith. That is the core of what Christianity says, and we have truly been saved through faith. The salvation that comes through the love of God, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through faith in the redemption by which God has truly redeemed us, is the real salvation. That we obtain salvation by believing in Jesus Christ is truly a tremendous truth and blessing. In no religion of this world is there any word that the god one believes in bore one's sins, died for one, and rose again from death to save one. Only our God the Father, who made us, and Jesus Christ have truly loved us and, when we had fallen into sin, saved us from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, made us children of God, and made us workers of God. I give thanks before God. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

To those who believe in Jesus and yet misunderstand

< Romans 3:10–31 >

“As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.’ ‘Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit’; The poison of asps is under their lips; ‘Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.’ ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to

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demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

The perfect salvation obtained by faith

The salvation of the remission of all sins is obtained by faith. Being saved from sin is not by works but by faith. Then, believing in what word is faith? It is the faith that believes in the word of the righteousness of God. We are saved by believing in the word that God has saved us, who were sinners. Therefore, those who have been saved by believing in the righteousness of God are righteous people, are people who have no sin, have become children of God, have become people who can never again have sin, and have become people who have obtained perfect salvation. It means that God, too, does not judge the soul of the one who has been saved, that is, the one who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit that God gives, and does not look at the sins he commits on this earth. In the Bible, the word 'pass over' means 'to look past, to simply let go by.' It means that God passes over the sins committed by those who have been saved. Why is that? It is because He has demonstrated His righteousness through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God has removed the sins of all of us, all the sins we commit from the time we are born until we grow old and die. It means that because God Himself is righteous, He removed all our sins in order to make those who believe in Jesus righteous as well. God's salvation was never a salvation that removed original sin but did not remove actual sins. It was not a matter of removing sins through daily prayers of repentance. God's removing of our sins was a salvation that removed them once and for all, forever. That once-and-for-all salvation is clear within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, transferred to Him once and for all, He shed His blood and died on the Cross to receive the judgment for those sins in our place. Because the remission of sins that Jesus gave by rising again from death is perfect, we who believe are righteous people.

But the thing is that people, even while believing in Jesus, know wrongly and believe wrongly. People say that since they will commit sins as they go on living, how can they have no sin and how can they become righteous? Because they think and believe this way, even though they believe in Jesus, they are believing in vain. There are many such people.

Also, there are many people who, when they read the Bible, do not know exactly what this word is saying and just believe blindly according to their own thoughts. They simply move on with their own uncertain thoughts, saying, "It must be like this; this word must mean this." Therefore, they become spiritually blind people who look at the Bible but do not see, who hear but do not hear, and who try to believe but cannot believe. So people think that it is right to have sin even after believing in Jesus.

There are many such people. But the Bible says that it is wrong to have sin even after believing in Jesus. The Bible says

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that those who believe in Jesus become people without sin. It says, *"To demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26)*. God has removed all the sins of people. He has removed all the sins of those who believe in Jesus, and even a person who does not believe in Jesus has no sin if he believes in Jesus, who has removed all his sins. It is right to believe in this way. But there are many people who do not do so, and there are many people who believe while misunderstanding the Bible.

Justification is not leniency

Just as the Sadducees in the Bible thought wrongly about the resurrection and misunderstood it, so those who believe in Jesus wrongly today also know Jesus wrongly, know the gospel of the water and the Spirit wrongly, and understand it wrongly. They are misunderstanding.

When Jesus was on this earth, the Sadducees had this kind of misunderstanding about the resurrection and asked Jesus. In a certain family there were seven brothers, and the eldest brother married and died without leaving any children. So the second brother married his sister-in-law and lived with her, but the second brother also died. In order to raise up offspring, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh all married her, but they all died without children. Then, if that woman lived on and on until the end and died, in the resurrection on the last day, whose wife would that woman be? They asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection, since she had lived with all seven brothers. Then Jesus said, *"You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they*

neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven" (Matthew 22:29–30). Holding thoughts that belong to this earth, they had understood that even when resurrected, a woman would be resurrected as a woman and a man would be resurrected as a man. But when we are resurrected in spiritual bodies, it is not so in the kingdom of God. Just as they misunderstood in that way, today, too, those who believe in Jesus believe in Jesus but misunderstand. They misunderstand, thinking that it is right to have sin even though they believe in Jesus, and that although there is sin in the hearts of those who believe in Jesus, God simply counts them as "a son of God, a saved person" for the one reason alone that they believe in Jesus.

They misunderstand in that way because they understand the word *"the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26)* as a word without certainty, as a word meaning that God leniently regards them as righteous.

But in fact, this word does not mean that; it was for God, on His part, having removed all the sins of those who believe in Jesus, to say to those who believe in Jesus, "You, too, are a person without sin." In order to give salvation in this way, the Lord, by His own righteousness, has removed forever, on God's part, all our sins, whether original sin or actual sins, that we commit from the time we are born until we die. In that way, God has saved us perfectly. The basis on which sin has been removed is what Jesus actually did. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in our place, and rose again from death, the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a righteous person without sin.

God removed all our sins in order to say this word: "I am your perfect Savior." When God looks at us, He has said, "The

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one who believes in Me is a person without sin." It means that the Lord, through His own perfect righteousness, has loved us perfectly and saved us with perfect salvation. But people misunderstand this word. They say that even if they believe in Jesus, they have sin because they commit sins. They think that original sin has been remitted, but actual sins must be washed away by praying prayers of repentance every day. Thinking, "Since we cannot actually be washed as white as snow, we will become perfect only at the moment of death," they think that although they have sin, because they believe in Jesus, God leniently regards them as having no sin and leniently regards them as having been saved.

But that is their own delusion. God does not show leniency toward us while we have sin. Because He has removed all our sins by His righteous law, those who believe in Jesus actually have no sin. Because they have no sin, God hands down this word conclusively: "You have no sin; you are righteous saints." Our Lord has saved us perfectly. Yet people misunderstand.

The second misunderstanding is that although they believe in Jesus, they are still saved by keeping the law well. They also misunderstand, thinking, "We keep the law well, and for what we have failed to keep, we pray prayers of repentance well and become sanctified; that is how we are saved." But in the Bible, our Lord clearly nailed it down, saying, "Being saved from sin is obtained by faith; it is a definite faith." We must get out of such misunderstandings as that salvation comes from keeping the law, or that it is right to have sin even though one believes in Jesus.

Before believing, there was not one righteous person

We must look carefully at whom this word is spoken to. The word says, *"As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10–12)*, and goes on to say, *"The way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:17–18)*. Here, the words 'as it is written' were spoken in order to say that originally there was not one righteous person among men. But people misunderstand, thinking, "Since it is written in the Bible, this word is the truth and an unmistakable word, and so, unconditionally, there is none righteous, no, not one." So they say, "Look, the Bible said there is none righteous, no, not one, so how can anyone believe in Jesus and become righteous? It makes no sense." But this means that before believing in Jesus, there was not one righteous person among all people. The word *"As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)* was spoken by quoting the word of the Psalms, *"They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one" (Psalm 14:3)*. Among the descendants of Adam, there was originally not one righteous person. Adam, too, was not a righteous person. But the word is that they have become righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. It means that before believing in Jesus Christ, there was not one righteous person. But people misunderstand this word. The word that one becomes righteous by believing in Jesus points to the salvation accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus, who bore all the sins of the world once and for all through

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the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross. Since Jesus rose again from death and gave righteousness to us, among whom there was no righteous person, we become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The righteousness of God revealed apart from the law

Let us look at the word that follows. *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19–20)*. This word means that God gave the law to sinners through Moses, and that the reason He gave the law was to put all the world under the judgment of God and to make people know that they are under judgment. There was no one who could keep the law, and there was no one who kept the law perfectly. The law was given merely to make people realize and know their own sins. Therefore, it means that in that age, when there was no righteous person but only sinners, God gave the law to Moses and made people realize and know their sins.

But after Jesus Christ came, it says, *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets" (Romans 3:21)*. This is none other than the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It says, *"In it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Romans 1:17)*. But God, through the apostle Paul, rebuked those who try to become righteous by keeping the law well, saying, *"They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and*

seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3). It means that they do not believe in the righteousness of God, but strive to establish their own righteousness and do not submit to the righteousness of God.

Originally, sinners could not keep the law, nor could they become righteous apart from Jesus Christ. But setting aside the law, setting aside the fact that man was born a sinner, and setting aside man's works, God sent a Savior to mankind, and that Savior was none other than Jesus.

What is the righteousness of God revealed apart from the law? It is that God sent His only Son, His only begotten Son, to this earth and saved us through that only begotten Son. It is the salvation in which He passed all the sins of mankind on to that only begotten Son, and the only begotten Son bore all the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross and saved us. This is none other than the righteousness of God. God, through His own Son, had that Son have all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, so that the Son swept up all the sin of the world and bore it in our place, and that Son was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for the sin of mankind in our place, died, rose again from death, and became our Savior. It means that this was the salvation God gives to those who believe, through this righteousness of God.

There was no difference in this. It means that there was no difference for anyone—for Jews, for Greeks, or for Gentiles.

Then what was it to obtain this salvation? Being saved is not by keeping the law out of a misunderstanding while believing in Jesus, nor by human righteousness, excellence, or goodness. It is only by believing in that salvation revealed through Jesus, that is, in Jesus Christ, who came to this earth, received baptism from John, the representative of mankind, at the age of thirty, had all

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the sins of mankind passed on to Him, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. It was the salvation by which He saves those who believe in that righteousness of God, that salvation by which God saved us perfectly through His only Son. We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that since Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross.

The one who believes in Jesus, who has saved him, is saved before God and becomes a righteous person. This is the gift of salvation that God, having pity on us sinners, gave freely and unilaterally. Our having obtained this salvation is a gift that God gave unilaterally. *"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).* So it is the salvation that God gave to us unilaterally. Not even a speck of human works has entered into this. Having lived a good life, having prayed many prayers of repentance, having reached sanctification, having read the Bible a hundred times, having been martyred, having served the Lord well—none of these is mixed in, not even a speck. This is something God did 100% unilaterally in order to make us His children, righteous people, and His own people. God created us with His own purpose, and it is the salvation by which He unilaterally saved, according to His own will, us who were born as descendants of Adam, who had been enticed by Satan the devil, by sending His only Son. Neither human effort nor human will is included in this, nor is human purpose included. We were not born on this earth because we wanted to go to the kingdom of God, nor did we devise anything because we wanted to go to the kingdom of God. This was entirely and purely the salvation by which God saved us.

The passing over of the sins that were previously committed

Therefore, God has given salvation to us who believe, and God is patient for a very long time. It has now been about 2,000 years since Jesus Christ came. So it amounts to His having waited for us for 2,000 years. The word says, *"To demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25)*, and *"the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:26)*. It means that He saved us in order to demonstrate His righteousness, and secondly, in order to make those who believe in Jesus sinless. Dear fellow believers, how long has God been patient? He has been patient for a very, very long time. If God had not been patient but had come in a hurry and finished the judgment, we would not have received the remission of sins. What would happen if God were to come suddenly even now? Those who have not received the remission of sins now would all go to hell. But God has been patient for a very long time. What is the meaning of the word *"passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25)*? Jesus received baptism from John and bore all the sins of the whole world, was nailed to the Cross and judged, rose again from death, ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. That He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God means that He has done all the work of saving us.

And it means that Jesus is seated as the Judge. Because He saved us with the water and the blood, God gave the authority of judgment to His own Son and had Him hand down judgment on those who do not believe in Him and who disregard the righteousness of God, the salvation of God. No one knows when the time of this judgment is. We know the time of judgment only

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by looking at the signs. What God looks at is only this: "Do you believe in Jesus or not? Do you believe or not that Jesus saved you with the water and the blood?" It means that believing in Jesus and praying prayers of repentance well, giving offerings well, and doing this or that well have nothing to do with it. However, in the kingdom of God, God surely makes those who have been persecuted for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, for righteousness, receive a reward on this earth, too, and He surely rewards them in the world to come as well. In the dimension of such rewards He does look at such things, but when He looks in the dimension of whether one has been saved or not, whether one is God's people or not, it means that He looks only at this: whether or not one has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the truth of being born again of water and blood, in which the righteousness of God is contained.

It means that God, toward mankind, passes over the sins that mankind commits. It means that He simply looks past them. Because He knew it all long ago and had Himself removed them all, because He knows all of us humans, and because the human flesh is fundamentally something that commits sin by nature, He looks past them, saying, "I came down to this earth, received baptism from John, went to the Cross and died that horrible death in your place, and rose again from death, and so I have saved you. If you were people who could do anything about your salvation, why would I have done so?" Because they are sins He has already had passed on to Him and settled through the baptism He received from John, because they are sins that have been judged, because they are sins He has already settled Himself, because He has done the righteous work, and because, rather, when He sees humans continuing to commit sins, God can demonstrate His righteousness and demonstrate His glory, God simply looks past them. That is why the Book of Romans

said, *"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29)*. It means that God saves us and uses the saved as His workers, and even if they are lacking and weak as workers, He does not regret it or take it back. He saved them, knowing full well that they are such people.

It is said that God did not make angels His servants, but made weak ones who have flesh His servants. For that very reason, it says, the righteousness of God is rather revealed. Because we humans are weak, whenever we are weak, the righteousness of God is revealed and His glory is revealed. In the first part of this chapter, the apostle Paul speaks about that point as follows. *"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? And why not say, 'Let us do evil that good may come'?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just" (Romans 3:5–8)*. It means that it is just for them to be judged. People misunderstand, saying, "Since we have been born again and have no sin, let us just go on sinning—wouldn't you say that? Wouldn't you say and teach that?" So the apostle Paul is saying, "Who would teach that? Even if someone taught it, who would do that? A person commits sin because he has his own flesh and follows the instincts of that flesh; who, just because he has been born again, would say to others or to himself, 'Now that I am born again, let us sin as we please'?" Also, some people slander, deceive, and speak ill of us, saying that we teach that way, but even so, if a born-again person commits sin, is not the righteousness of God rather revealed? Since God has removed the sins of humans, who commit sin until they die, is it not rather the righteousness of God, that salvation by which God saved us,

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and how much God loves us, that is revealed? That is what this word is saying.

So, that He passed over sins does not mean that He shows leniency while there is sin. Because Jesus Christ saved us with the water and the blood about 2,000 years ago, and because there is the clear truth of that salvation, it was said that there is truthfulness, and that there is goodness, righteousness, and truthfulness—and truly, our Lord has saved us in that way. The Bible says, *"One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5)*. God, too, is one, so for those who believe in Jesus, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one God. And the faith is also one. It is the faith that truly believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believing that God loved us and sent His Son, that the Son received baptism from John and had all our sins passed on to Him, bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross, received the judgment in our place, died, rose again on the third day, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and so became our Savior. We are saved by believing. And the baptism is also one. It means that there are not two.

But people interpret this word as they please, and there are so many people who misunderstand, saying, "Look, we have sin, but because we believe in Jesus, God leniently regards us as having no sin. Look! It says that He justifies the one who believes in Jesus, so we are not really righteous; He is leniently regarding us as righteous." But if you read the whole of chapter 3, you come to know that it is not so, and if you read the whole Bible, you can know it fully. The apostle Paul said in this Book of Romans, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1–2)*. That there is no condemnation to those who are

in Christ means that there is nothing at all to be judged for those who fully believe that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, bore all sins, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so has saved us perfectly—that God has saved us. It means that they have been saved. It means that they have become not people who have sin, but people who have no sin. It means that they have become the people of God. But the thing is that people have misunderstood and interpreted the Bible as they please.

"By the law of faith"

We must look at the whole Bible, look at what Jesus Christ has done, and know and believe through the Old and New Testaments what we are to believe and what Jesus Christ has done for us. We must know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The gospel is good news. It is beautiful news. Truly, though we are people who cannot help but commit sin, our Lord came and saved us with the water and the blood, so that we have no sin—how beautiful this news is! How joyful this news is! Truly, there is no news more joyful than this. We thought we would go to hell because of sin, we thought we could not be saved, we thought we would be judged, and yet there is nothing to be judged for, and He has saved us with the water and the blood—where is there any news more beautiful than this? This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

What exactly is the gospel of the water and the Spirit? It is the righteousness of God. What is the righteousness of God? It is the salvation by which He saved us with the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

But the thing is that people have misunderstood. They misunderstand this word in Romans chapter 3 so much that,

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because of this word, people cannot believe the whole of the Old and New Testaments. They cannot believe that Jesus Christ has saved us perfectly.

Dear fellow believers, people misunderstand a great deal. They take the word that says He justifies as some kind of conditional, as something that says it will be so. But in reality, there is no sin. Because God is righteous, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, and in order to show through Jesus how much He loves us, Jesus received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross and saved us perfectly. He is clearly saying that the one who does not believe in that has sin. It was the word that He saved us in order to say that, since He has saved us perfectly, the one who believes in Him has no sin. Though people misunderstand, salvation—that is, receiving the remission of sins, becoming a righteous person, becoming a child of God, and having the Holy Spirit in one's heart—comes only by the law of faith. If we believe that God loved us and sent His only Son to this earth, that this Jesus Christ received baptism from John and bore all the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross and received all the judgment, and that Jesus has removed our sins with the water and the blood, salvation comes upon that believing heart. This is the law of God. The law of faith makes us believe in the price of sin that has already been paid. It is receiving in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and then rose again from death.

There is a law by which God saves us. The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are the absolute law. Being saved before God is not something obtained haphazardly without any law. Before God there is a law for

being saved. So we are saved only when we believe according to the law, we are saved only when we believe in the righteousness of God, and that is knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not by works but only by the law of faith. The word says, "*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28)*. It means that a man's being acknowledged before God as righteous and without sin is not by the deeds of the law but by faith. It means that a sinner is not saved by keeping the law well through his works. This is what people misunderstand. Then it says, "*Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also" (Romans 3:29)*. It means that Gentiles, too, are saved through faith in that salvation by which He saved them with the water and the blood, and that the Jews, too, are saved by the faith that believes in that gospel of the water and the Spirit by which Jesus saved them with the water and the blood, and that all are saved by faith.

"There is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith" (Romans 3:30). God acknowledges it. God acknowledges the one who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart, saying, "You have been saved." This is none other than salvation. This salvation was a matter of being acknowledged before God.

"On the contrary, we establish the law"

Therefore, the apostle Paul says in the last verse, "*Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31)*. People misunderstand this, too. It says that we establish the law, and the law God established is very clean. And it is holy. This becomes

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the standard. How we should serve God, how we should conduct our relationships with people—this is the yardstick and this is the law. People misunderstand, saying, "Doesn't a person who has been saved in that way have no need to keep the law, either?" That is not so.

Rather, it says that we establish the law. The law does not refer only to the written law and the 613 articles of the commandments. It is not that once we are born again we do not have to keep it; it says that we establish the law, and so even we who have received the remission of sins know, in the light of the law of God, whether our own conduct has been made right or not, and whether our own conduct has been done well or not.

Where is the standard? If we have only received the remission of sins, where is the standard? Where is the standard of what is done well and what is done wrong, of goodness and kindness? Righteousness comes about by believing in Jesus Christ, and goodness comes about by preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit, but where is the standard of truthfulness and goodness? It means that we truly come to know it when we look in the light of the word of God. If, through the law, we have done well from the first commandment to the fourth, that is right, and when we have not, it is not right. Not only the written law but all the word of God becomes the yardstick for our lives. That is why all the word of God is entirely necessary for our whole lives. That is why what is absolutely necessary, even for those who have received the remission of sins before God, as they live in this world, is the word of God. So the Book of Ephesians says *"having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness" (Ephesians 6:14)* and *"take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17)*. It means that in order to keep the faith until the last day, we must take the word of God. It

means that we are to be saved by the word of God, to gird ourselves with the belt of truth by the word of God, and to know by the word of God what is right, and what way of living is right and not right before God. Also, He said that, through the salvation God has given and through all the word God has given, we are to know what is right and what is not right, and through that salvation God has given, we are to stand firm in faith, whole, without falling. The basis for standing firm by the word is also the salvation received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins of transgressing the law, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death. We believe in that grace, give thanks, and live according to the word of God.

And it was said that through that faith we follow after God, and that through faith we love our brothers and sisters, understand them, and help one another, standing firm in love. Therefore, we must not misunderstand.

Come out of misunderstanding and accept the gospel

Among Christians, those who have not been born again misunderstand the word *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)*, and next, they also misunderstand, thinking, "Even though we have sin, because we believe in Jesus, God leniently regards us as having none," and they misunderstand, saying, "They teach that after being born again, one may sin as one pleases," and, "Then there is no need for the law." The reason they misunderstand is that they do not know the true

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righteousness of God, the gospel of the water and the Spirit by which God has saved us perfectly.

Because there are such misunderstandings, the apostle Paul spoke of this in this Romans chapter 3. But the thing is that this existed in the old days, too, and in the present age there is far too much of it. Even in the present age, theology teaches that although there is sin, because one believes in Jesus, God leniently regards one as having no sin. It makes no sense at all. So those who have learned that way all believe that way, and those who teach are all like that, too.

Dear fellow believers, is the fact that you and I have been born again a matter of works? If Abraham were said to be a man born again because he did not sin, then how could Abraham have been saved, when he handed his own wife over into another's hands by calling her his sister? Seen in human terms, Abraham was a man with nothing to put forward. It is understandable that he sinned because he was lacking, but just because his situation was unfavorable, he said to his wife, *"Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you" (Genesis 12:13)*. If you look at Abraham by human ethics, do you think there is anything right in him? Would it be only that? How many other things are there that were not recorded?

Dear fellow believers, the sins you commit, Abraham also committed, the apostle Paul also committed, and everyone commits them. Everyone, without exception, commits them. So it is not that a person is saved by living kindly, well, and uprightly; rather, in order to make us His children, God unilaterally saved us with the water and the blood of Jesus Christ and unilaterally made us His people. This salvation is like that. What the gift God has given consists of can be known in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus, through the baptism He

received from John, had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and after shedding His blood on the Cross and receiving the judgment for those sins in our place, He rose again from death and made us the people of God.

Therefore, this salvation is a gift God has given. He made it so that no one can boast, saying, "I have been saved by making my conduct right." We boast of the righteousness of God; whenever our own lack is revealed, we rather boast of the righteousness of God and give thanks, discern the will of God, and rather go forward by faith. We acknowledge it. When we are saved, we acknowledge it before God, and after we are saved, we acknowledge it; it is all acknowledging, and there is nothing else. There is nothing else at all.

So far, I have spoken of several things that those who have not been born again misunderstand. And we have thought once more about how our Lord has saved us. I give thanks indeed. But because so many people who have not yet been born again are misunderstanding, even if this word is spoken to them dozens of times, they do not understand. Still, if we focus and listen, it becomes clear, and we become able to say what needs to be said to those who misunderstand. Why are those who believe in Jesus not saved? Because they have such misunderstandings, they do not accept this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Is this gospel of the water and the Spirit genuine or not? It is genuine. Then why do they not accept it? Because they hold such misunderstandings, people do not accept this genuine gospel of the water and the Spirit. Why is that? Because they take all those misunderstandings to be true. ✉

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Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

Accept the righteousness given freely

< Romans 3:19–31 >

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then

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make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

The boasting that must stop before the law

Do you think that you must still do something more in order to be accepted before God? You may consider salvation far away because your deeds are insufficient to make up for past wrongs, or because your efforts to make your heart clean fall short. But today's word does not try to collect the price of righteousness from us; it reveals that we have been justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. To know this grace, we must clearly know what we can do and what Jesus has done for us.

Let us read verses 19 and 20. *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19–20)*. The law stops the mouth of the person who comes before God boasting of his own conduct. It is because even if he speaks of what he has done better than others, the fact that he has transgressed the commands of God does not thereby disappear. People go as far as admitting that they have sin, yet they do not become serious before the word that says that if there is sin, there is judgment. But since the word that all the world is under judgment includes even the person who considers himself righteous, no one can stand outside that word by himself while picking at the offenses of others.

Then can we solve this problem with a resolve to keep the law more diligently and become righteous? Paul said that no flesh will be justified by the deeds of the law. It is not because

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the commands of God are not right, but because we, who were born having inherited sin, cannot keep those commands perfectly. The law makes us realize what sin is and what kind of people we are, but it cannot become the Savior who erases the sins we have realized. When we know that this is as far as the work of the law goes, we stop the effort to prove our own ability before the law and look to the work of the One who will save us. Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins that the law made us realize, passed on to Him when He received baptism from John. And He shed His blood on the Cross and received in our place the judgment that the law demands, and rose again from death. What remains for us, whose mouths have been stopped, is not boasting but believing in this work, and by believing in this way we are justified.

The promised salvation has been revealed

God did not give only the commands that expose our sins and end there. At the same time as He made us know that we are people who would be judged because of sin, He also gave the promise of salvation that would remit those sins. Now Paul leads us from the matter of realizing sin to the matter of believing in the righteousness God has accomplished.

Let us read verses 21 and 22. *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference" (Romans 3:21–22)*. That it was revealed apart from the law means that this righteousness did not come from the record of a person's keeping the commands. Since it is the right work that God Himself accomplished through Jesus Christ, we

cannot say that this righteousness is also lacking on the grounds that our works are lacking. The word that it was witnessed by the law and the prophets also shows that it is not a salvation suddenly made up by human thinking.

In the law of sacrifice in the Old Testament, a sinner laid his hands on an unblemished sacrificial offering to pass his sins on to it, and received the remission of sins through that offering dying in his place. Since Jesus accomplished the salvation God had promised in this way, when we speak of the blood Jesus shed, we cannot leave out the baptism He received from John before that. It is because the death on the Cross becomes the judgment for our sins only when Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, bears our sins. The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are not separate stories, but the work that reveals the righteousness of God that has saved sinners.

This righteousness reaches all who believe in Jesus Christ, and there is no difference. It is not that He gives a more complete salvation to those who have learned the law well and a lesser salvation to those who have not. Since anyone obtains the righteousness of God by believing in the same Savior, we must not hold up our own circumstances and step back, saying that we cannot receive grace. Since the basis on which He gives salvation lies in Jesus, what we must look to is not how many or how few qualifications we have, but what the Lord has actually accomplished.

The righteousness obtained freely and the propitiation

Verse 23 reveals that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The fact that this is so with everyone does not

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mean that sin is nothing serious, but that all of us need salvation. Yet verse 24, which follows, says that such people as we have become those who are justified, so we must know by what the person who was wandering between sin and judgment has been changed.

Let us read verses 24 through 26. *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:24–26)*. Redemption is buying by paying a price, that is, the work by which He paid the price and delivered us from sin. Because we did not pay the price, we obtained it freely, but it is not that sin disappeared without any sacrifice. Because God the Father set forth His own Son as a propitiation, and Jesus paid that price in our place, we have become righteous people by grace.

Jesus, the Son of God, by receiving baptism from John, had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, just as the sacrificial offering had sins passed on to it through the laying on of hands. Because of the sins He had passed on to Him in that way, He shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, and died, and by rising again from death He gave the remission of sins and new life to us who believe. The sin of the world that the Lord bore contains all the sins that you and I will commit from the time we are born until we die. Since a sin is not left out of the Lord's redemption just because one came to notice it later, you must not make the point in time of your own realization the boundary of salvation.

The word propitiation reveals that through this redemption, the relationship of enmity between God and us has been resolved. Sin had blocked the way between God and us, but because Jesus removed that sin, we can come to God, calling Him Father. That God passes over the sins that were previously committed does not mean, either, that He pretends not to see sin without resolving it. Because the eternal Lord bore once and for all even the sins we would commit in the future and received the judgment, God sees the person who believes in that salvation as one who has no sin.

This is why verse 26 says that God is also righteous and also makes the one who believes in Jesus righteous. God did not blur the judgment on sin; He paid that price through the sacrifice of Jesus, and He actually made us, who believe in that right work, righteous people without sin. It is not that He changed only our name to righteous while sin remained as it was. Therefore, do not put off the remission of sins as something to be accomplished in the distant future, but accept the redemption Jesus has already accomplished, now, as the salvation of your own heart.

The grace received by faith establishes the word

If salvation has been accomplished in this way, where is there any basis for us to exalt ourselves? Verse 27 says that there is no place for boasting, and reveals that this was done not by works but by the law of faith. The law was a law that says “do,” so we could not keep it, but the law of faith is a law that says to believe in our hearts the salvation God has accomplished, so anyone can stand before that law. Since faith is not our preparing a new merit and offering it to God, but receiving in our hearts

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the salvation the Lord has prepared, we cannot boast of our own works.

Let us read verse 28. *"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28)*. That we receive the remission of sins in our hearts by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean that it does not matter what we believe. It is believing in the righteousness of God made clear above, that is, the salvation in which Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. It is not the fact that our own resolve is firm, but the fact that the Savior, who is the object of our faith, has saved us perfectly, that establishes our assurance.

Verses 29 and 30 say that God is the God of both Jews and Gentiles, and that He justifies the circumcised and the uncircumcised alike by faith. It is not that the way of salvation differs because of a mark one has in the flesh or because of one's origin; together we receive the righteousness that the one God has accomplished. Therefore, we can neither think ourselves superior to others because we learned first, nor suppose that grace will be less for us because we heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit late. Because the One who made us righteous is the same and the salvation He gave is the same, we serve the Lord together with thanksgiving.

Finally, let us read verse 31. *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31)*. Saying that the law cannot save us is entirely different from saying that the law is wrong or useless. Since the word God commanded is still right, even after we have received the remission of sins, it reveals what is wrong. At that time we do not justify sin on the grounds that we have been saved, but believe that the Lord bore even that sin and turn

around from the wrong way. Since the Holy Spirit is in us and leads us to love God and to care for other souls, there is no reason to live following thoughts that go against the word.

To the question of what more we must do in order to be accepted by God, the text answers that there is no price we must add. It is because Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, has already paid that price in full by shedding His blood on the Cross. Therefore, even in the face of the rebuke of the law, do not lose hold of grace, but while acknowledging the word that exposes sin, also fully accept the righteousness of Jesus, who removed that sin. In a heart that believes in the righteousness received freely, there is thanksgiving offered to the Lord instead of self-boasting, and with that thanksgiving there is a life that values and follows the word of God. ✉

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Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

Is it justification, or the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

< Romans 3:23–31 >

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

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Is the doctrine of justification correct?

Romans chapter 3 speaks about being made righteous by faith. The word says: *"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)*. It says that we have been justified freely through the redemption that is in Jesus. The question is whether this word, that we have been justified freely by grace, means that God calls us sinless even though we have sin—that is, justification—or whether it means that He calls us righteous because we actually have no sin. I would like to share the word on this point.

Is the doctrine of justification that theology speaks of correct? It is not. The doctrine of justification is the doctrine that, because one believes in Jesus, God calls him sinless even though he has sin. The doctrine of justification says that even though one believes in Jesus and still has sin, God calls him one without sin; but did the apostle Paul speak in that sense here? The point is that he did not. Our having become sinless came about through this redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is because our Lord bore our sins through the baptism He received from John and paid the price of sin by dying on the Cross. Because we have become sinless by believing in our hearts in that work the Lord has already completed, God says that the person who believes that God has saved us in this way has no sin and is righteous. To say that a person is righteous means that he has no sin.

The doctrine of justification that theology speaks of amounts to a negative and very unrighteous claim that Jesus could not fully bear our sins, all the sins that exist in the universe for all eternity.

Some people try to become righteous by the works of the law and strive to become sinless by keeping the law. There are many such people. But for a person to become sinless by living a good

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life is an impossibility. Seen through the eyes of religion, such a doctrine seems reasonable, but spiritually it can never be so.

A legalistic life of faith interprets the word *"being justified" (Romans 3:24)* as meaning that although a person has sin, because he believes in Jesus, God regards him as sinless in consideration of the merit of his believing in Jesus. But Jesus removed the sin of the world with the water and the Spirit. The phrase "the redemption that is in Jesus" means buying something by paying a price. Long ago in America there was the Civil War because of the emancipation of slaves. The wealthy people of the South insisted that the slaves must not be given freedom, because if the slaves were freed, the masters themselves would immediately have to do the work, while the North said that since the slaves were human beings just like them, they must be given freedom. So it became a political issue, and that was the war that broke out from that fight. Before this war broke out, slaves were the property of their masters. When a slave had children, the masters took those children out and sold them. There was what was called a slave market; a high platform was set up in the market, and the slaves were put up for auction. Then the price was bid up. If it started at 100 dollars, someone over there would call out 110 dollars, someone else over there 120 dollars, and another, "I will pay 200 dollars," and then, when the price went no higher, the bid was accepted. So that person paid the money and took the slave away. A slave exists for his master. Buying a slave with money and taking him away in this way is called redemption. What did Jesus do in order to redeem us, who had become slaves of sin—in order to buy us? To save us from sin, He Himself was born on this earth, received baptism from John and had all our sins transferred to Him, and because He had borne the sin of the world, He went to the Cross and died, shedding all the blood in His body; He rose again from death in

three days, testified for forty days, and ascended to the right hand of the throne of God, and thus He saved us from sin. That is how He became our eternal Savior. So our Lord has granted us to be justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Jesus. So by believing in that truth, we have received the remission of sins, new life, and the righteousness of God. This is what the Bible is saying.

However, many people in this world try to become righteous by works, while on the other hand they do not believe that Jesus has saved us with the water and the blood. There are those who hold a faith that regards Jesus as one of the sages of the world and degrades Christianity into one of the religions of the world. However, among those who explain justification, there are some who do not believe the truth that Jesus Christ actually removed all our sins through the baptism He received from John and His blood on the Cross, but instead understand justification to mean that God regards us as righteous even though we still have sin. Such a theory of justification amounts to not knowing and rejecting the work of salvation through the removal of sins spoken of in the Bible.

The doctrine of justification that came out of the heads of philosophers

The Puritans were so persecuted in England that they crossed over to the American continent. The very first things they did when they got there were to build a church and hold worship, to farm the land, and to set a day of Thanksgiving and give thanks. These people later founded seminaries and taught, and among those who taught there were theologians and philosophers. Clergymen who were philosophers taught in the seminaries as

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doctors. Looking at the word *"being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)*, they understood it as, "Ah, so if one believes in Jesus, God calls him sinless even though he has sin," and that is how they taught it. They knew the meaning of the word 'redemption' and the words 'the grace of God' here, but because they did not know how to connect them with the redemption and grace that are in the truth of the water and the Spirit, they settled on interpreting it as the doctrine of justification. The doctrine of justification is the doctrine that God calls one sinless even though he has sin. Since such doctors taught the students, the students who learned under them all learned the doctrine of justification and became pastors, and that is how the doctrine of justification spread far and wide. The meaning of redemption is made clear in the price of sin that Jesus actually paid. The baptism Jesus received from John in order to have all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, the blood He shed on the Cross in order to receive the judgment for those sins in our place, and the salvation He accomplished by rising again from death are contained in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The word 'saint' means a person who does not have even a speck of sin. But in reality, there is sin in the hearts of people who attend church. If you ask them, they say, "Where is there anyone without sin? Everyone has sin!" "Where in this world is there a person without sin?" They say that since it says *"There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God" (Romans 3:10–11)*, what righteous person could there possibly be? They speak of the doctrine of justification because they do not know the truth of the water and the Spirit. The doctrine of justification was made by people in that way and has spread in that way until today. So when theologians teach that doctrine, people have simply come

to take it to be so. But in fact it is not so. God has never said that a person who has sin is sinless, nor has He ever failed to send to hell a person who is to go to hell. God has shown grace to whom He would show grace, and has shown mercy to whom He would show mercy. And He has said that He will surely judge those who are to be judged because of sin. Because the words of theologians have influenced people all over the world, many people know it that way and believe it that way. So they attend church but have sin in their hearts, and though they have sin, they call one another saints and all alike say they are "saved sinners." What those who believe in the doctrine of justification have in common is that they are all alike sinners. Even those who say they believe in Jesus have sin just the same, and in conclusion, they have not received the righteousness of God. Those who have not received the righteousness of God by faith are all the same religious people. There are many religious people within Christianity, too. Religious people are not true Christians. Only those who have received the righteousness of God can live a true life of faith. Therefore, the faith that believes in the doctrine of justification is entirely a wrong faith. So we must know where the doctrine of justification came from. It was made up and came out of the heads of philosophers. They took the word *"being justified freely" (Romans 3:24)* and used it as material for the logic of the doctrine of justification. They say that God calls one righteous, calls one sinless even though he has sin, calls one a saint, and that the reason is that he believes in Jesus as the Savior.

Dear fellow believers, however, if you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has given, you actually have no sin. Were my sins and your sins actually passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John? They were. Jesus had the sin of all mankind passed on to Him. Jesus bore that sin

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through that baptism, went to the Cross, and received the judgment for sin. And He rose again from death in three days and has ascended to the right hand of the throne of God. That Jesus is my Savior and yours. If we have received the remission of sins by believing in that Jesus, is this a gift of God, or were we saved from sin by our own efforts? Salvation is the gift of God. A gift means the grace of God. We have been justified freely by grace. Did you and I receive the righteousness of God by grace, or did we make ourselves sinless by ourselves? We received the righteousness of God by the faith that believes in the redemption that is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We did not receive it by justification. Who is Jesus? He is the Savior. God, who is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, removed sin through His Son and saved us from all the sins of the world. God has made the righteousness of God through Jesus. When we believe in the righteousness God has made, what happens? We have no sin. Because there is no sin in our hearts, the Holy Spirit has come upon our hearts as a gift. So I am a righteous person. I am lacking, and when others look at me there are things I have done wrong, but because I believe that Jesus removed all my sins through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, there is no sin in my heart.

Those who believe in the doctrine of justification believe in a false Christianity. They believe in Christianity with a great misunderstanding of it. Their faith does harm to many people. You may have heard about the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of sanctification recently until your ears ached, but the reality is that this world is falling into destruction by believing in the doctrine of justification. They all believe that, although they have sin, they are declared sinless because they believe in Jesus. When Jesus received baptism from John, He bore all our sins. When we once more ruminate on and look to the fact that

Jesus has already removed all our sins, we cannot have sin, and we have none. Though you and I are lacking, because we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we are actually righteous. So the Bible says *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)*, but this does not mean that He washes our sins away at the time we confess them, at the time we repent of them; it means that since He fulfilled the righteousness of God with the water and the Spirit, He has remitted even all those sins. If we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has given, the remission of sins takes effect.

The propitiation set forth by His blood

The word says: *"Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25–26)*. Since the word is long, let us look at it in pieces. It says *"whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith" (Romans 3:25)*. It says that God set Him forth as a propitiation. This shedding of blood speaks of death, and it means that God, in order to remove our sins, ordained this: that we receive the remission of sins from God through death. For Jesus to die, He first had to receive baptism from John. We must understand what it means that God made Him a propitiation by His blood. The meaning of this word is this: because the remission of a person's sins is a remission premised on death, because it is a remission premised on the

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price of death, it says that God made Him a propitiation by His blood, through faith. It is premised on death. It says *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. If there is sin, there is death, and this death is both physical death and spiritual death, and that death means going to hell. God gave us the law so that we would realize and know our sins, and when we came to know sin through the law, when we came to know that we are those who cannot help sinning every day, Jesus, for your sake and mine, in order to reconcile us with God the Father, was born on this earth as the One standing in between, received baptism from John and had all our sins passed on to Him, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and thus removed the sin that had made us enemies with God and reconciled us. He made us children of God and made it possible for God to call us His children. God was speaking of the righteousness of God. Reconciliation was accomplished in this way, with the price of sin paid. Because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world, not to mention our sins, passed on to Him once and for all, He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and He rose again from death and set us before God.

"Passed over the sins that were previously committed"

What does this word *"to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25)* mean? To pass over what was previously committed means to look past it, to pay it no regard. You will have heard people say, concerning a matter that must be dealt with seriously, "This is not a matter to be

passed over." The word 'pass over' means 'to look past something' and 'to pay it no regard.' God has truly been patient for a very, very long time. He created this mankind and has been patient for a very long time. There is no telling how much sin mankind has committed and how much more it will commit in the future. Yet the word says that God, in His forbearance, intended to demonstrate His righteousness by passing over the sins that were previously committed. God intended to demonstrate His righteousness—that is, He truly did a very righteous thing for us, He truly did a good thing. What is that? It is that He removed your sins and mine. He made those who believe in the righteousness of God into people without sin.

But looking at the earlier part, there is the word *"passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25)*. What is this word? I do not know whether you and I, born on this earth, will live until we are 80 or until we are 90 before we die. Some are 20, 30, or 40, and there are also people past 60. Then let us cut it off cleanly and start from age 30. Say you and I received the remission of sins at 30. If we received the remission of sins at 30 and live until 70, there is a period of 40 years in which we can sin, and we can commit sins during that time. But our Lord, before you and I were born, 2,000 years ago, came to this earth, received baptism from John at the age of thirty, was nailed to the Cross at the age of thirty-three, paid the price of sin, received the punishment for sin, rose again from death, and became our Savior. That Lord, knowing that we would be born 2,000 years later, and knowing that we would sin from the time we were born on this earth until we die, bore those sins as well. And do our descendants sin, or not? They sin, too. Our children sin, and our grandchildren sin. *"Passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25)*—previously; in God's sight, these are sins He already removed long ago. From our point of view

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now, they are sins He removed previously in time; but when God looks at the people living on this earth, because God is eternal, because He removed eternal sin long ago, no matter how we may be born in the future and live committing sins, in God's sight they are sins He Himself already removed long ago.

They are sins He has removed. So it says *"passed over the sins that were previously committed" (Romans 3:25)*. Human beings sin every day, but in God's sight, He sent His only Son Jesus to this earth, had Him receive baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty and have sin passed on to Him, had Him bear the sin of the world and be nailed to the Cross and die, and raised Him from death, and so He already removed sin long ago. Because they are sins He removed long ago, He demonstrated His righteousness by passing over the sins that were previously committed. That He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus—this is what the word says. Because when Jesus removed sin He removed all the sins of this world, because God hates sin and removed sin through His own Son, when God looks at us now, though we are committing sins in the present tense, because He has removed these sins as well, He pays no regard to those sins. If one has received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood, as his own Savior—if he acknowledges that he has sinned, acknowledges what was wrong, and acknowledges that Jesus is his Savior—then though his deeds are still lacking, in God's sight he is a righteous person. He has no sin. So God passes over the sins that were previously committed; He pays them no regard.

This does not mean, however, that we may sin as we please. It is not telling us to sin, but even after you and I have believed in Jesus and received the remission of sins, do we sin or not? We do. Do we sin on purpose, or because we are weak? We sin

because we are weak. If we were perfect, once we made up our minds we would have a will that never changes, and once we did wrong we would say, "Ah, I did wrong," and never sin again; but what is our will like? It changes from morning to evening. We make a vow and a resolution in the morning, and by evening it all comes crashing down and we say, "Why did I do that again?" and so at night we sharpen the sword of our will once more. In the morning we sharpen the sword once more and begin the day, and that may last a day, two days, even a week, but we can see it all collapse within a month, or in some cases within a few years. Whatever we may be like, though we commit sins in the present tense, in God's sight it is all a thing of the past. God's having remitted our sins is entirely a thing of the past. He remitted all our sins in the past. That is why He demonstrates His righteousness by passing over the sins that were previously committed, and God Himself has done what is right for us and has removed all our sins, and He also intends to declare those who believe in Jesus Christ righteous and sinless. In that way He has saved us from sin.

Prayers of repentance cannot pay the price of sin

So only when we know this truth can we believe, and only then can we keep from falling even when people attack us. Those who believe in the doctrine of justification are all alike: when asked whether they have sin or not after believing in Jesus, some say they have sin and some say they have none. Then, when asked what to do about the sins they will commit in the future, they say that all they have to do is offer prayers of repentance. Such a person is one who believes in the doctrine of justification. Those who say they wash away their sins by offering prayers of

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repentance are people who believe in the doctrine of justification. Do we receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance for our sins, or is it that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, had all our sins passed on to Him, received the punishment on the Cross, rose again from death, and thus remitted our sins? When, and by believing in what, does sin disappear? Does sin disappear when we offer prayers of repentance, or did sin disappear when we believed that Jesus removed our sins with the water and the blood? We are without sin because we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit; sin does not disappear because we offer many prayers of repentance. In fact, if we examine it point by point, by the faith that says sins are washed away through prayers of repentance, not a single person can become right before God. Dear fellow believers, if someone stabs a person in the stomach with a knife and kills him, and then says, "Oh, I am sorry. I did wrong. I have killed your only son. From now on I will never kill anyone again. Please let me off just this once," does that sin disappear with that? The price for that sin must be paid. The price must be paid. He must either go to prison or be put to death himself. Would it do, instead, merely to ask in words to be let off?

People, believing in the doctrine of justification, say that they receive the remission of sins if they offer prayers of repentance. How can one receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance? We must know and believe that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, shed His blood, bore our sins and removed them, and received all the judgment; where is there any such thing as receiving the remission of sins by offering some prayer of repentance? That would be the same as the religions of the world performing rituals to try to send the souls of the dead to a good place.

Dear fellow believers, what the law says is this: if a person sins even once in his whole life, it calls him a sinner, and even if he has never sinned once, it calls him a sinner merely for having come out of his mother's womb with sin, and says he must go to hell. But people usually are unwilling to admit that they came out of their mother's womb with sin. And as for from what point they judge whether someone has sinned or not, while living on this earth they do not acknowledge sin even up to the age of five, and begin to acknowledge sin from about the age of seven. They acknowledge the sins committed while living on this earth as sin. Then, if one wants to become a person without sin before God by living a good and virtuous life through the works of the law, he must not sin even once from the cradle to the grave. He must not sin even once, not even by mistake. If he sins even once, it is all void. Even if he has been 99.9% perfect until now, if he sins just once, everything is void. Dear fellow believers, in any religion, living a good and virtuous life through deeds is not a bad thing. We Christians must live good and virtuous lives. And we must be led by the Holy Spirit. And we must live for God. Be sure to keep this in mind. We must live for God. But even if, in some religion of the world, a person sucks the pus of a leper, or takes on the illness of a cancer patient in his place and dies, no matter how good a life he lives, if he does not have love—if he does not have the love Jesus has given him, the love by which Jesus removed his sins with the water and the Spirit—that person goes to hell. Without that faith, he goes to hell. That is what I am saying.

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The doctrine of justification makes God a liar

Dear fellow believers, to speak in conclusion, the doctrine of justification is wrong, and a person who says he believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit but actually has sin in his heart is wrong, too, because he is still a sinner. When a person believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, his sin truly disappears; but if he believes only theoretically and has sin, he is still a sinner. It is the result that matters. In God's sight, whether you believe or not matters, too, but the point is, if you truly believed, how could you have sin? Then those who believe in the doctrine of justification, as a result, make God a liar. They are saying that God could not remove all my sins and could not remove all my future sins. When I was preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, while a certain dictator who was regarded as the most wicked person in the world was still alive, I once said that Jesus had taken away that man's sins, too, when He received baptism from John, and that He had died on the Cross for that man's sins as well, so that, strictly speaking, on God's side, that man's sins had also been removed. But I said that because that man does not believe that Jesus had his sins passed on to Him through His baptism and died on the Cross and so saved him from his sins—because he has the sin of not believing—he goes to hell and is a sinner.

If people believe in the doctrine of justification and believe in Jesus, yet say that they have received the remission of their past sins and receive the remission of the sins they will commit in the future by offering prayers of repentance, that is the same as a faith that says Jesus is a liar—that says, "Jesus is a liar." It is very wrong. It is terribly wrong. It makes Jesus out to be a complete liar, a cult leader who deceives people. Such cult leaders extort all of people's money. They tell people to bring

lots of money and take it all for themselves. But Jesus is not a cult leader. For our sake, in order to give us new life and remove our sins, He came to this earth and removed them once and for all. Through His life of thirty-three years—being born, receiving baptism from John and bearing the sin of mankind, being nailed to the Cross at the age of thirty-three and pouring out all the blood in His heart and dying, and rising again from death—He has truly saved us from sin. Jesus is not One who deceives people. Those who believe in the doctrine of justification make Jesus out to be One who deceives people. They are always making God out to be a liar. They believe in Jesus for 10 years, and even after 10 years they say, "Jesus, please remit my sins." What does that mean? It means saying, "Jesus, please come down once more and die on the Cross for me, since I have sinned again, since my feelings have become so dirty." To cleanse one's feelings, one's heart, one must go to the fountain of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and wash it clean with that spring water, by believing in the word of God. It must be washed by faith. To put it in terms of the result, among all the people in this world, those who believe in Jesus and yet have sin in their hearts are in reality calling God a liar every day, despising God and standing against Him.

We must not believe in the doctrine of justification. It is a wrong doctrine among the doctrines of Christianity. Justification, sanctification, election—I studied such utterly absurd things for 10 years. And even among those in evangelicalism there are people who believe this. Some say they have no sin, but strictly speaking they have sin; and some say they have received the remission of sins, but say that if they sin, all they have to do is receive the judgment for that sin, receive the punishment. All of this is believing in the doctrine of justification. Strictly speaking, while they say that if one believes in Jesus one has no sin, when

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asked whether there is sin in their conscience or not, they say, "There is sin, but God regards me as sinless, and therefore I have no sin." But a person who has truly received the remission of sins truly has no sin in his conscience. Dear fellow believers, is there sin in your conscience, or not? There is none. The Bible says *"having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22)*. Also, the Book of Hebrews says *"how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14)*. Dear fellow believers, Christ received baptism from John and died on the Cross, and so He saved us from sin. Did Jesus take away all the sins of our conscience? He did. Jesus also took away the sins we commit by our deeds. The sins we commit in thought, the sins we commit knowingly, the sins we commit unknowingly, the sins we commit out of weakness—He took away all these sins. When we commit all those sins, the sin is recorded in our conscience. And we feel pain in our conscience. The conscience is a sensor for sin. But Jesus bore all the sins that pain our conscience when He received baptism from John, and He died on the Cross and removed all our sins. That is why He cleanses our conscience from dead works and makes us serve the living God. Are there times when we deceive our conscience, or not? There are. As we live, when things are unfavorable to us, when it looks as though we will end up in an awkward situation, we do not say what our conscience is telling us. In our hearts we say it is so, but with our mouths we say it is not. But the point is, shall the blood of Christ not cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Jesus received baptism from John on this earth and died on the Cross; if we believe in that baptism and that blood, will all those sins committed in our conscience and all the sins we

commit in our whole lifetime be remitted, or not? If we believe, they are all remitted. Even for the sins we commit again in our conscience after receiving the remission of sins, the merit of our Lord's having washed them away once and for all overflows at all times; whenever we only look to it and believe, whenever we only acknowledge our shortcomings, that merit overflows at all times.

The Lord has removed all our sins with the water and the blood. As for the merit of His having removed them, He has made that grace overflow at all times—even until the day we die and go before the Lord, even until that day when we will live forever—for those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and for those who every day look to that grace by which He removed our sins, meditate on that word, hear it with their ears, and ruminate on it in their hearts. This is why we must come to church, hear the word, and worship every day. If someone says, "I have received the remission of sins, so I have no sin. When I die I will go to the kingdom of heaven," and does not come to church, then because he sins every day as he lives, if he does not hear the word and does not hear what the Holy Spirit says to the church, his heart becomes dirty again, and though he has no sin, his conscience becomes as evil as it can be, and he becomes a useless person in the world, a person who commits more sins than the people of the world. That is why the church is needed. If we come to church, hear the word, and ruminate on it again in this way, then even if our conscience has become dirty and something bad has happened when we come to church, when we look to the Lord and hear once more that the Lord received baptism from John and bore all our sins with the water and the blood, the Holy Spirit says in your heart, "That's right, that's right," and in your heart your conscience rejoices, saying, "Ah, so that is how it is. Now I can live." That is why

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you and I can have bright, sparkling eyes, can laugh, and can live happily by faith without being weighed down by sin. And we come to have fellowship with God and live receiving the blessings God gives. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? If you keep away from church and keep away from the word, it is hard to keep your faith.

The law of faith is the salvation accomplished according to the law of sacrifice

The word says: *"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:27–28)*. The question is by what law a person comes to be without sin—by works, or by faith? This law of faith appears in the Old Testament. Is it by works? No. Is it by the law of faith? Yes. It is by the law of faith. What is the law of faith? In Exodus, God gave this law and showed the Tabernacle. And He showed the law of sacrifice. And when we come to Leviticus, He laid down the law of sacrifice, specifying concretely what to do and how to do it in order to receive the remission of sins before God. What to do when a priest sinned, what to do when one of the people sinned, what to do when an elder sinned, what to do when the whole congregation sinned—and when someone wanted to have those sins remitted, as an individual he brought an unblemished lamb or goat, laid his own hands on the head of that animal, confessed and acknowledged his sins, saying, "I have committed such and such sins," and passed them on; then he killed that animal, caught its blood, and gave it to the priest, and the priest put that blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and poured it out on the ground, and

then took the fat of that animal and burned it on the altar of burnt offering before God, and so had him receive the remission of sins. This remitted the sins of a day. And on the Day of Atonement, which atoned for a year's worth of sins, the high priest killed the goat of the sin offering, sprinkled its blood on and before the mercy seat in the Most Holy Place, came out and put it on the horns of the altar, laid his hands on the live goat to pass the sins of the people on to it and sent it into the wilderness, and burned the fat of the sin offering on the altar, and so had them receive the remission of sins. In the Old Testament, God laid down the law of sacrifice and said that when the people, the priests, or anyone sinned, if they offered a sacrifice in this way they would receive the remission of sins—God would remit their sins—and that as for the sins committed over a year, if the high priest offered a sacrifice for the people, all the sins that had piled up over the year would be remitted. In the New Testament, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb; He came to this earth, received baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again from death, and so remitted our sins. So it is by believing in this that we receive the remission of sins. So is receiving the remission of sins something that comes about by works? No. It is by the law of faith. The law of faith means believing in the law of sacrifice that God laid down in order to remit our sins, and receiving the remission of sins by believing in our hearts that, according to that law of sacrifice, Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, bore all our sins, died on the Cross and paid the price of our sins in full, gave us life, and rose again from death—by believing in that Jesus. So it cannot be by works. And is there any room for boasting? We cannot boast. It says that a person becomes righteous not by keeping the law, but that we receive the remission of sins by believing that God remitted

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all our sins according to the law of sacrifice He laid down for remitting all our sins.

The word says: *"Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith" (Romans 3:29–30)*. Is there, before God, any difference in the way of receiving the remission of sins between the people of Israel and the Gentile peoples who are not Israel? There is none. Is God the God of the people of Israel only? Is He not God to us Gentiles as well? The word says that God is the same, and that the law of receiving the remission of sins, which God has given to all mankind, and the faith are the same as well. There is only one God, the Holy Trinity, and He determined to remove all our sins through Jesus and removed them all with the water and the blood; receiving the remission of sins by believing in this just as He gave it is the same for all, and everything is the same.

The faith that, on the contrary, establishes the law

The word says: *"Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law" (Romans 3:31)*. Then, can the law be done away with just because we believe? It cannot. Why can it not? It says that, on the contrary, we establish the law. Why is that? It is because the law is the foundation by which we can obtain salvation through believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is, it is what God has promised us. As for this law, it is not that only the Ten Commandments are the law, nor that only the 613 articles of the commandments are the law; the whole Bible, which God has spoken to us, mankind, is the law. That is why, do we make void

the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish it. Through the law we come to know God's commands, through the law we come to know and realize sin, and through the law of sacrifice within the law we receive the remission of sins by believing that our Lord saved us according to that law of sacrifice; that is why we rather establish the law. In the light of the word of God, I am such a lacking person as I live my life, and though I am a person who has received the remission of sins, I can know that my deeds were not right, or that my deeds were right; because it is the law that can judge what is right and wrong in my deeds, because the law is the standard of deeds, we rather establish the law. Because the law is God's command, and because I could not keep God's command and so could only go to hell, yet the Lord saved us with the water and the blood, we establish the law all the more firmly. It means we acknowledge God, saying that it is truly so. So it is absolutely not the doctrine of justification. For a person who has received the remission of sins, if it is not the doctrine of justification, what is it? It is faith. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the real truth. It is not that God removes only our original sin and then removes our actual sins each time we repent every day, sanctifying us and thereby saving us. The Lord did it once and for all: Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross and died once and for all, and saved us from all sins once and for all. Through faith we have become righteous people. Religious people all believe in the doctrine of justification, but from among them God has saved us and has caused us not merely to believe in Jesus but to actually believe in the remission of sins; we must give thanks for this and believe in that way. We give thanks before God. Therefore, we who know our own shortcomings before the law hold all the more firmly to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For Jesus bore all the sins of

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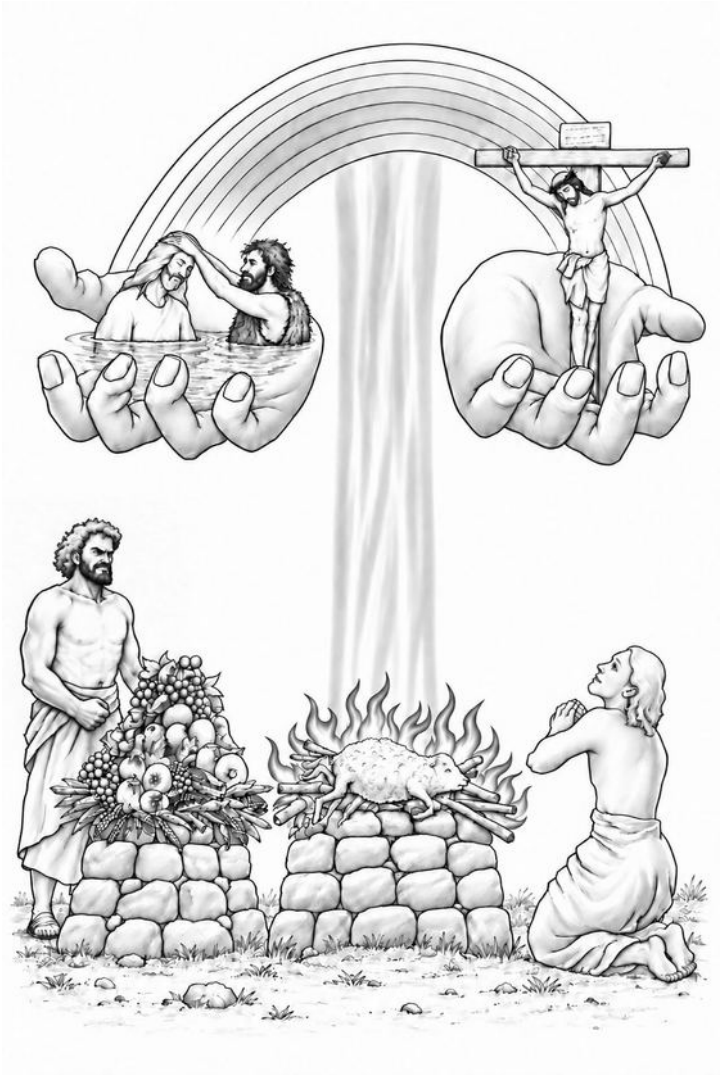
the world, including even our transgressions, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, and rose again from death and gave us righteousness. ✉

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CHAPTER

4

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Righteousness is received not by merit but by grace

< Romans 4:1–25 >

“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.’ Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father

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Abraham had while still uncircumcised. For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, 'I have made you a father of many nations') in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, 'So shall your descendants be.' And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore 'it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification."

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Where is the righteousness we can present before God

What must we present when we stand before God? It seems that if we gather up the good things we have done in our lives, our hearts will feel secure, but even while we are counting those deeds, the faults we have not been able to erase come to mind along with them. Just because there are things for which we have been praised by people, the sins that are before God do not disappear, either, so we must clearly distinguish between the merit we ourselves have piled up and the righteousness God gives.

Paul raises this question by taking up Abraham. The first question, what Abraham, who is called the father of faith, found according to the flesh, does not mean that we should search out his admirable deeds and boast of them, and the Bible, unlike the biographies of great men in the world, records just as it is that the father of faith had nothing to boast about according to the flesh. Since it says that if he had been justified by works he would have something to boast about, but not before God, this means that Abraham, too, did not become a person without sin by his own works.

Let us read verses 3 through 5. *"For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:3–5).* What became righteousness for Abraham was the faith that believed the word God had spoken. It was not that he vaguely thought that a god exists; it was that he acknowledged the God who had spoken to him as true.

The wages a person who has worked receives are his rightful due. Since it is what the one who assigned the work must pay back, the one who receives it does not regard it as a gift received freely, and the word grace, unlike that, refers to a gift given without anything in return. But in God's justifying the ungodly there is no merit that we have piled up beforehand, and because we accept with our hearts the salvation by which He has removed our sins, it is called grace. With a heart that presents its own labor and asks for that much righteousness in return, one cannot receive this gift.

Before the word "the ungodly," do not think of other people first. If we examine ourselves as to whether we have fully kept the word of God, we come to know that we, too, are those who have lived according to our own thoughts without fearing God. God sent Jesus Christ to save such people as us. What is the work Jesus did for us, the ungodly? It is that He received baptism from John and had our sins passed on to Him, that He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place as the price of those sins, and that He rose again from death. Therefore, we must turn from the thought, "I will fix myself and produce righteousness," and believe in this work the Savior did.

A person who looks for righteousness in his own works is bold on the days he has done well and becomes afraid again on the days he has done wrong. This is because the basis of his righteousness lies in his own state, which changes every day. But since the righteousness God has given does not come from our daily score, faith leads us away from holding on to our own satisfaction and sets our hearts on the One who spoke. Paul speaks of Abraham in order that we, too, may stand by this kind of faith.

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The grace that has actually removed sins

Paul shifts his gaze from Abraham to David and speaks of the blessedness of the person who is justified apart from works. David, too, had faults, but those faults did not become the basis of salvation; rather, the grace of God, who remitted them, became his blessedness. To know the blessedness of the remission of sins, we must know how God dealt with sin rather than how admirable a person has become.

Let us read verses 7 and 8. *"'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin'" (Romans 4:7–8).* Lawless deeds are wrongs that break the law of God, and both the actions that appear outwardly and the sins committed in the heart are included here. The word that sins are covered does not mean that He left those sins as they were and shut His eyes to them; it means that the Lord has removed those sins.

Jesus said to John, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15),* and by receiving baptism, He had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all. Because He bore those sins, He received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and saved us from sin. The basis on which God does not impute sin is not our resolve, but this righteous salvation in which Jesus bore sin and paid its price.

Therefore, the remission of sins obtained by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a thought that soothes the heart. Because it is believing in what God has actually accomplished, even on the day we examine ourselves and discover a fault, we can set our hearts on Jesus, who bore even that sin. If we think, "My past wrongs have been remitted, but

the sins to come are something I must take care of separately," we end up dividing with our own thinking the salvation of the Lord, who bore all the sins of the world.

A person who knows this grace does not try to hide his wrongs. The reason he acknowledges what he has done wrong and turns around, yet does not try to pay the price of sin with his own regret, is that Jesus has already borne that price. The blessedness of the remission of sins is not the satisfaction of a person who does not know his faults; it is a heart that knows its own faults and yet gives thanks for the righteousness the Savior has accomplished. That is why we do not remain in discouragement but can do again what is right before God.

The word that He has remitted sins does not lead us to take sin lightly. Because Jesus bore with His own body the law of God that sin must be judged, we come to know how precious that salvation is. The Lord had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross. Salvation is not cheap just because He gave it to us freely; it is grace because the Lord's sacrifice was made in our place. The blessing David spoke of belongs to the person who has received this very salvation.

Circumcision is a sign that confirms the righteousness received

Next comes the question of whether this blessedness is given only to those who have been circumcised. Paul does not first ask whether one has been circumcised or not; he asks whether the time Abraham was justified was before or after circumcision. Since Abraham had already believed God and been

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acknowledged before he received circumcision, the circumcision he received afterward cannot be the cause of the righteousness he had received before.

Let us read verse 11. *"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also" (Romans 4:11)*. Circumcision was a sign confirming the righteousness already received by faith. We must not miss this order: it was not a merit that had to be acquired first in order to be justified, but a token given after the faith God had acknowledged.

Because of this order, Abraham became the father of those who believe without having been circumcised. Verse 12 also says that even those who have been circumcised must follow the faith Abraham had while still uncircumcised. Since what matters is not relying on the fact that there is a sign on the body but believing the word God has spoken, both the circumcised and the uncircumcised receive righteousness by the same faith.

Today we, too, must not make the length of our religious life or the amount of service we have done the basis of our righteousness. The fact that we have heard the word for a long time is distinct from accepting in our hearts the salvation that word testifies of, and the labor of long service cannot take the place of the remission of sins Jesus accomplished. When we come before God, what we hold on to is not the record we have built up for ourselves, but Jesus Christ, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross.

This work the Lord did for us comes first, and we hear of that fact and believe it. To say that we have received the remission of sins by faith does not mean that we have produced, by the

power of our own faith, a salvation that did not exist; it means acknowledging that the salvation God has already accomplished is for me. Therefore, do not hesitate, thinking that you still have nothing worth boasting about; receive into your heart the word God has given, just as Abraham believed before circumcision.

The word that Abraham is the father of all who believe shows that the way for different people to come before God is also one. No one can claim to be more righteous than others by putting forward what sign he has, nor can anyone push away a person who believes the word on the grounds that he has no such sign. Since what all of us need is the righteousness of God, who has removed sin, we must also lay down before that righteousness the heart that compared one another's outward appearance.

The promise stands sure because it is according to grace

Paul moves on from the matter of circumcision to the matter of the law and the promise. Verse 13 says that the covenant that Abraham and his seed would be heirs was not given through the law but through the righteousness of faith. An heir refers to one who will inherit, so this means that the qualification to become God's people and inherit the kingdom of heaven in the future is not produced by one's own works but received by believing the One who promised.

Verse 14 says that if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect. If it is changed so that one must first keep the law perfectly in order to receive what God has said He would give, then man's achievement comes before the promise. But when we set ourselves before the

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law, the sin of not having kept it fully is exposed, so we cannot receive the promise by that method.

This is also the reason verse 15 says that the law brings about wrath. The law exposes our wrongs and makes us know that we, who have broken its commands, are under the judgment of God. Since the judgment that a law has been broken also comes from that law, we must not make the word that where there is no law there is no transgression an excuse that we have no sin. The conclusion Paul draws here is not that man has no sin, but that no one can become an heir by relying on the law.

Let us read verse 16. *"Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Romans 4:16)*. See that the basis on which He makes the promise sure is grace. If it could be received only when our works were perfect, no one could receive it with boldness, but because we receive it by believing in the righteousness God has given, we can hold on to that promise. This is because there is One who received in our place the wrath the law brings about. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had the sin of the world, including our sins of breaking the law, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that wrath in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Therefore, the promise stands sure not on our achievement but on the price the Lord paid.

To say that we do not rely on the law does not mean that we should live without distinguishing between good and evil. We must forsake what is wrong and do good, but we must not think that we become children of God as a reward for doing good. Because serving the Lord out of gratitude for the salvation already given is different from adding merit in order to obtain

salvation, even after receiving the remission of sins we must keep the order of grace that God has established.

Therefore, to say that the promise is sure is not a demand that we must make ourselves strong people. It means that since God has promised us what He gives by grace, we can believe in Him. To a person who knows his own shortcomings, this order is a great comfort. For instead of looking for some other boast to cover up his shortcomings, he can know that the salvation God has bestowed is sufficient and give thanks to Him.

He was raised in order to make us righteous

Now Paul makes clear what kind of God the God whom Abraham believed is. Since the God of verse 17 is the One who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did, His promise is not bound by the measure of the strength a person has. The One who told Abraham that he would become a father of many nations was God, who also had the power to accomplish what He had spoken.

Verses 18 through 21 show that faith concretely. Abraham knew that his own body and Sarah's womb were as good as dead, but he did not reach a conclusion by putting his own circumstances ahead of the word of God. Even when there was nothing to hope for, he believed the promise that God would give him descendants, and being convinced that the One who had promised was able to perform it, he gave glory to God. The accounting for righteousness in verse 22 is connected with this very faith that believed God to be true, and God acknowledged that faith as right.

Do not read this as saying that if you strongly desire your own wish, it will come true just as you wish. What Abraham

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held on to was not a wish made from his own thinking but the promise God had made, and the assurance of his faith also lay in God, who would fulfill that promise. We, too, must not look at ourselves and calculate the possibility of becoming righteous, but must believe the word that testifies that He has saved us as people without sin.

Verse 23 makes clear that what was written was not for Abraham's sake alone, and calls us before the word. God, who spoke directly to Abraham, speaks to us today through the written word, and that word conveys the salvation Jesus accomplished for us. Let us read verses 24 and 25. *"Also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:24–25)*. The word that He was delivered up means that Jesus, the Son whom the Father sent, bore our sins through the baptism He received from John and received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and the word that He was raised means that He overcame death and made us who believe righteous. The more we know how many sins we have committed, the more we must put our faith in Jesus, whom God gave up for those sins, and in God, who raised Him.

To believe in Jesus, who rose again from death, is to believe in the Savior who has solved the problem of sin. Do not make the experience of once having suffered because of sin, or the feeling that your heart is at ease now, the basis of your justification. The written word was not given to prove our feelings; it was given so that we would believe in what Jesus Christ did. That is why, even when our hearts waver, the object of our faith does not change.

At the beginning, I asked what we must present when we stand before God. Do not try to find in yourselves and present

perfect conduct that even Abraham did not have. Jesus Christ, when He received baptism from John, had our sins passed on to Him, and He paid the price for them by shedding His blood on the Cross. And since He rose again from death and has already become the basis of our salvation, what we are to present before God is a heart that believes in the righteousness He accomplished. Put away the heart that was counting your own merit, and hold on to the promise of grace, giving thanks to Jesus, who was raised in order to make us righteous. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

On the faith of Abraham

< Romans 4:1–8 >

“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.’”

He found nothing according to the flesh

The apostle Paul, after preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit fully in the preceding chapter, speaks about the faith of Abraham. The word says, *“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God” (Romans 4:1–2)*. What did Abraham find according to the flesh? According to the flesh, he found nothing. To put it bluntly in a word, that is what it says. If we ask whether Abraham, the father of faith, did something well

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according to the flesh and so had his faith acknowledged before God and received something from God, the answer is that there was nothing.

Our father Abraham had his faith acknowledged through his faith in God. That is what this word is saying. What kind of faith does the Bible say Abraham's faith was? The word says, "*For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (Romans 4:3)*. It means that Abraham's faith was believing God and the word God had spoken, and that God acknowledged his faith as the right faith.

Then, if Abraham was acknowledged as right by believing God, what content is there in this? Romans chapter 3 says "*by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)* and "*now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed" (Romans 3:21),* and speaks of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John when He came to this earth and of the blood of the Cross. With this word as the premise, it says that Abraham was acknowledged as right through faith.

Then do we, too, have anything to boast about in the flesh? Is there anything we have done well before God for which we can be acknowledged? There is not. We arrive at the conclusion that, like Abraham, the faith that believes God and the word of God—that is, the fact that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth and removed our sins through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross—is acknowledged as right by God. The faith we present is the faith that accepts the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross. It is believing that Jesus rose again from death and made us righteous.

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Wages are not grace

The word says, *"Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Romans 4:4–5)*. If one works and receives wages, that is of course not grace and not a gift. The one who obtains salvation purely by the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross is acknowledged before God. We try to be acknowledged before God by doing something well, but we cannot. This word means that if we are to be acknowledged by God, we must present, with the faith that believes God and His word, the remission of sins we have received before God by believing in the baptism Jesus Christ, the Son of God, received and in the blood of the Cross for all our sins, and only then are we acknowledged.

What kind of faith is the faith acknowledged by God? In the end, it is what is repeated over and over. We must acknowledge that we are people who have nothing to boast about in the flesh. And since God the Father passed our sins on to His Son through the baptism His Son received from John, and had the Son receive the punishment for our sins through the blood He shed hanging on the Cross, the word is saying that the person who has the faith that believes this has his faith acknowledged before God.

The Bible cannot be understood unless it is explained. I have the thought that God did this on purpose. As I preach the word, I think about it. There are many epistles of Paul, and I think how good it would have been if Paul had preached the word a little more concretely there, as we do now, and whether everyone would then have known it. But if that had been done, a wicked person, even with a wicked heart, would know this and say, "I believe," and say before God, "Since I have believed,

acknowledge my faith," and that, too, would be a real problem. That is why the word of God seems to teach everything, yet has hidden some parts. Jesus said, *"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes" (Matthew 11:25),* and that is truly so. This word today, too, says that Abraham was not acknowledged before God in the flesh, but that spiritually he believed God and was acknowledged by that faith.

Then what kind of faith is it? It means that Abraham was saved by the faith that believes the fact that the Son of God came to this earth, bore our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and, bearing the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood to pay the price of our sins. If God the Father had not done that work of sending His own Son to this earth, having Him receive baptism from John, having Him hang on the Cross, and raising Him again from death, we could not know how God has saved us. But because God taught us that truth, just as Abraham believed God and had his faith acknowledged, within this word we have received the remission of sins by believing in what God the Father and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came to this earth, did, and God the Father acknowledges that faith. Because God the Father has saved us in that way, it is saying here that our having been saved by faith in that way is acknowledged.

Receive the remission of lawless deeds by faith

Therefore, David speaks about the happiness of the one who has received the remission of sins. The word says, *"'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute*

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sin'" (Romans 4:7–8). Everything we have done wrong is lawlessness. Everything that breaks the law of God is sin. Because the law is the command of God, not keeping the command is, in every case, doing lawless deeds.

Our lawless deeds are remitted, but how are they remitted? It means that because Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, came to this earth and bore our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, because He went to the Cross bearing those sins and received the judgment for our sins, and because He rose from the dead and became our Savior, and because we know, believe, and acknowledge what Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth and did, God, too, has something to boast of, and we, too, can be acknowledged before God by presenting our faith before God with the faith that believes that God has saved us.

The word says, *"Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Romans 3:25–26)*. This is that word. It means that God sent His own Son, had Him have our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and had His own Son nailed to the Cross to receive the judgment for our sins, and so saved us. It means that by our believing that God has saved us, our faith is acknowledged, and God, too, has something to boast of in Himself. God Himself is righteous, and because we believe that He has saved us righteously, we, too, are righteous. The remission of lawless deeds has come in this way from the righteous work God accomplished. Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our lawless deeds, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John,

and after receiving the judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross because of those sins, He rose again from death.

If God had removed our sins in a careless, haphazard way, there would be no one in this world who could believe it and receive the remission of sins. What this is like is this: the people of Israel went into the land of Canaan, served idols according to the customs of the Canaanites, and believed in other gods besides God as their own gods, and so they received rebuke and chastisement from God. If God had not sent the Son to us as well, and had not made known to us that He had the Son receive baptism from John and bear our sins, and had only said that He hung on the Cross and died, we, too, would have ended up as religious people just like them.

But it is not that the Bible does not speak of this. If, as the word unfolds, it kept telling over and over again what Jesus did, the Bible would become enormously thick. But what about us? If we leave out what was said earlier, namely, that God has saved us, and speak of the word that comes later, it does not make sense. We who believe now must read the word putting first the fact that the Lord has saved me and you in this way.

The secret of the remission of sins taught to Abraham in advance

Do you know what kind of faith Abraham had? In Genesis chapter 12, God called Abraham. He said, *"Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1)*. Abraham obeyed. He set out, taking his nephew, his wife, and his livestock. After going a long way, he built an altar of burnt offering and offered

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a sacrifice. It means that wherever he went and wherever he rested, he built an altar of burnt offering, slaughtered a sheep or a goat, laid it on the altar, kindled a fire beneath it, and offered it to God. It seems as though Abraham went on believing only in God without knowing the law of sacrifice, but it means that God had taught Abraham the secret of the remission of sins concerning the altar of burnt offering and the sacrificial offering. Then later, the law of sacrifice appears in Leviticus.

In Leviticus it is written concretely: bring the sacrificial offering and lay hands on it, then take its blood and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and burn the fat on the altar of burnt offering and offer it to God. Because God spoke of this repeatedly, Abraham knew it even though he did not live in that age. It means that God had taught it to Abraham. In Genesis chapter 14, Abraham received a prayer of blessing from the priest Melchizedek, king of Salem. It means that, in a realm we do not know, God had established the priesthood even in Abraham's time. But He does not speak of it to us concretely, and only a few verses appear, and the writer of Hebrews tells of it repeatedly in the New Testament age. So it is not that we can know everything from the word alone just by reading it; rather, we must know that Abraham believed God and had his faith acknowledged. We must know that God had taught Abraham this knowledge by which I and you are saved. If we look at the word of the Psalms that God gave to David, it speaks of Jesus. David's psalm says, *"You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4)*. We can know that God saved those He loves even in the Old Testament age, and had taught beforehand, all by the Holy Spirit, the fact that He would save us through Jesus Christ, who would arise in the New Testament age. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit we now believe, the fulfillment of that promise is contained. Since Jesus

bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death, He actually accomplished the salvation He had promised.

The covering of sins means that the sins are gone

Concerning the happiness of the person who has received the remission of sins, the word says, *"'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered'" (Romans 4:7)*. To have had one's lawless deeds remitted means to have received the remission of sins for all sins. Then how do we receive the remission of sins? Our sins are gone because there are the baptism Jesus received from John when He came to this earth and the Cross. We receive the remission of sins by believing that fact. And as for this word that the one whose sins are covered is blessed, people think that we have sin, but that because we believe in Jesus, our sins are covered over. But it means that we have no sin, because Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John and bore our sins, and received the punishment for sin on the Cross. It means that this was prophesied through David, who wrote in the Psalms, *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered" (Psalm 32:1)*. We had sin, but all sin was removed by the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross. It means that when God looks at us, He looks at the faith with which we believe in Jesus.

Expressed in literary terms, it can only be expressed as having had one's sins covered, but expressed spiritually, it means that the heart of the one who has received the remission of sins is blessed. Because the Bible says that the one whose sins

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are covered is blessed, theologians think, “So although there is sin, it is counted as not being there; this person sins all his life, but because he believes in Jesus, though sin is there, it is counted as not being there.” So these people advocate the doctrine of sanctification, and they advocate receiving the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance. Theologians say that we have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus, but that this refers to original sin; that we are receiving the remission of sins in the present tense, but the sins we commit every day are remitted by offering prayers of repentance; and they also speak of future sins, saying that we will receive the remission of sins. It means that future sins, too, are remitted by offering prayers of repentance. This belongs to works.

But Jesus bore our sins once and for all by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, and so removed our sins once and for all, and we, by knowing and believing in that Jesus, have received the remission of sins once and for all and have become people without sin once and for all. David calls such a person a happy person. Those whom God accounts as righteous, those who have the kind of faith that is acknowledged by God, the faith we believe with, are happy people, and they are the people who have had all their lawless deeds remitted and have fully received the remission of sins for their sins by faith. It means that such a person is a happy person.

The reason Jesus received baptism from John

It is hard to find a person who, by reading the Bible, receives the remission of sins and is born again on his own. I myself have read through this Bible many times. But the more I read, the more I wondered why, while in the Old Testament there are the

laying on of hands and the shedding of blood, there is no laying on of hands in the New Testament; so I agonized over it, asked the Lord, searched the Old and New Testaments, and looked up the original languages, too, but I could not find out. Why did Jesus receive baptism from John? That was my question. Since I did not know, I asked people, but no one knew. Those who had studied much theology did not know, famous pastors did not know, professors did not know, and it was not found in books either. So I prayed to God and asked Him to teach me, and one day, as I was reading straight through the Bible, a light came on brightly in my head. It was this very word. *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:15–17).*

He said that *"thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, and it says that all righteousness is fulfilled. Righteousness means being right, and it means justice and uprightness. So this means that Jesus' receiving baptism from John is a just, upright, and right thing. Then what is the right thing? The word "all" is placed in front. It means that it is not one thing but every right thing. At that moment, understanding came to my head. I realized, "John, who baptizes Jesus, is the one whom God established on this earth, the one He sent six months ahead of Jesus, and the representative of mankind, so by giving baptism on the head of Jesus he is passing the sins of all people on to Jesus; it is so because Jesus is the Lamb of God, because He is the sacrificial offering." So I sat there in a daze for about thirty minutes. For the rest I already knew. Then, thinking, "Does this not mean that Jesus had the sins of mankind

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transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John?" I looked it up in the original language, and the word "thus" meant "in this way," that it would not do by any other way than this. Because Jesus could bear the sins of mankind only by receiving baptism from John the Baptist without fail, He received baptism and then went to the Cross.

Then why do people all over the world not know this? It would be enough to teach something this simple, so why had it not been taught? Thinking, "It may not be that those people are wrong; it may be that I am mistaken," I first turned the arrow toward myself, kept my mouth firmly shut, and searched through all the literature. I searched commentaries, I searched collections of sermons, I searched everything, but when they came to this part, they called it a difficult passage and simply skipped it. Whenever they came here, they just skipped past and never spoke of this at all. Out of curiosity, I looked at the writings of preachers who had gone before, but there was not a single word of it. While thinking, "This is a really big problem," I still thought, "Surely there is someone who knows this as I do." Since I believed it, for my part, the sin in my heart was gone, and so my face brightened as well. While I was searching, thinking that there would be others who knew, I came to speak about this whenever I met people, and when they listened to what I said all the way through and looked at the word, they received the remission of sins right then. Their faces, too, brightened, and their hearts were filled with joy.

Just as the word says, *"Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17–18),* they could not contain their joy. When this

gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached to people, they receive the remission of sins. These were people who had believed in Jesus for a long time. I could not keep my mouth shut. From then on, I preached the word to everyone I met, and everyone I met received the remission of sins. There is a reason the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as it is preached, gives joy to the heart. It is because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even the sins of our whole lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and so He received the judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death, and the problem of sin was ended.

There was a man who had come to a prayer retreat center to pray and was fishing. Dipping my fishing rod in alongside his, I asked him what prayer request he had come with, and he said he was planning to go to seminary but had come because there was sin in his heart. When I asked how, then, his sin would be gone, he said he had come to offer some prayers of repentance. I found myself asking whether sin goes away when one offers prayers of repentance. He said he had also fasted and prayed at home, but his sin had not gone away, so he had now come to the prayer retreat center. Then I asked whether he would listen to what I had to say, and he said he would. Though there was not even a Bible at hand, since he knew the Bible and I knew the Bible, too, when I told him such and such a chapter and verse, he received the remission of sins. “Is there sin in your heart, or not?” He was so glad that the sin in his heart was truly gone that he gave up fishing altogether and went back into the prayer retreat center, saying that, having received this wonderful salvation, he could not believe it all by himself, and that he had to tell his family. There was such a time.

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A person who has received the remission of sins is a happy person

Dear fellow believers, what kind of person is a happy person? The person who has received the remission of sins is a happy person. The remission of sins is not received by unconditionally believing in God and unconditionally believing only in the word of God. God the Father sent His own Son to this earth, had our sins passed on to His own Son through the baptism that Son received from John the Baptist, had Him die on the Cross, and raised Him again from death, and so caused you and me to be saved from all sins. It means that God the Father made it so that we are saved by that kind of faith. The person who has been saved by faith in this way is a happy person.

The person who has been saved by this kind of faith is truly a happy person. On this earth, too, there are many things that give various kinds of joy. Eating delicious food relieves stress, having a great time playing feels good, and talking and sharing with people who are of like mind feels good, too. There is even a saying that if you buy a house you feel good for a year, if you buy a car you feel good for a month, and if you get a haircut you feel good for a day. But the truly happy person is the one who, as this word says, has had all lawless deeds, all sins, remitted by faith. Such a person has many problems as he lives in this world, but his heart is joyful and happy.

As we live in this world, there are many things that trouble us, too. We have to do this and do that, and there are times when we are irritated by being pressed for time, but still our hearts are happy. This is because we are busy on account of work, not in anguish in our hearts, and it is hard because we are trying to keep our commitments. Is it not so with you, too? Though you suffer in many ways and your work is hard, Jesus Christ has removed

your sins in that way through the baptism and the blood of the Cross by which He saved you from sin, and you receive the remission of sins by believing in that Jesus. In the person who has received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart, and he has become one of God's people. If one has become a child of God, there is no worry about going to hell. The heart is at peace. That is why one becomes a happy person. David was such a person. The basis of this peace lies in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has already accomplished. Since Jesus, who had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, the remission of sins is complete even when our circumstances are difficult.

David ruled the nation for forty years. And David was happy. He lived at all times for the glory of God. The surrounding nations, such as the Philistines, were enemy nations that reviled God, and he went out to war with the faith that he must fight those nations, defeat them, and give glory to God, and he won victory after victory. In one war, David nearly died. He met an enemy warrior, and because David's strength was failing, David's men came and joined their strength together and killed that warrior. Because David lived for the glory of God, he was glad when he won a war, and he was glad when the nation expanded. When the opposing nations paid tribute of gold, silver, and the like, he did not make it his own but put it all into the treasury of the LORD, and with it he prepared to build the temple and carried out policies that made the people prosperous, and so David is called a wise and virtuous king. The people of Israel call David the greatest king. It is still so today. On that nation's flag, too, the "Star of David" is drawn. So it means that David was a happy person.

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I and you, too, are happy people. Abraham was a happy person, I am a happy person, and you, too, are happy people. How many worries there are in my heart and yours! When one worry passes, another comes, and when one problem passes, another comes, without end. Even so, such things cannot turn our hearts into hell. The word says, *"Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved" (Psalm 55:22)*. When many troublesome matters come in, I pray to God. And I entrust them to God. I pray, "God, please solve these problems. Please solve them so that they do no harm to the gospel." Having entrusted them in that way, I diligently carry on the work I have been given now. How could I solve every problem that comes in? Now, when I hear of something troubling, I do not make it bigger; I pray to God and hope that God will solve that problem. How could anyone live solving every problem that arises each day perfectly? It is enough to entrust them to God and be faithful to the work we have been given. And it is enough if only the gospel of the water and the Spirit is spread.

Abraham was saved by the faith that believes the word of God, by the faith that believes in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and became a happy person; so was David; and the people of faith were all happy people. I and you, too, are happy people. It means that I am a happy person and you, too, are happy people, not because the flesh is pleased, but because we have received the remission of sins in our hearts. With this kind of faith, we must live on like Abraham, like the people of faith. When things are hard, we must pray and live on by faith. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The gospel of God's baptism and the Cross

< Romans 4:1–9 >

"What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.' Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness."

The sin of the heart that blocks salvation

What does the word say is the reason a person is not saved before God? Why is it that all people are not saved before God, and why can they only go to hell? The word says that it is precisely because they have not received the remission of sins in

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their hearts that they are those who have not been saved before God.

Romans chapter 6 says, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*. What are the wages of sin? They are death.

All of us were born into this world receiving the great love of our parents. Some people look at a baby and say it is like an angel, but look at how children behave once they have grown up just a little. Are they really nothing but angels? When we see them causing their parents grief as they grow, the words even come out that there is no "enemy" like them. Even though children look innocent, you can practically hear them scheming to secure their own advantage.

Just look at the six-year-old child in our church. This child is so quick with little schemes that the child says things that are not meant at all without so much as a change of expression. When the child comes to church, I ask, "Did you miss me?" Then the answer comes, "Yes, this much!" and when I ask, "Did you dream about me?" the answer is "Yes." In fact, it is a barefaced lie.

Also, there is a child who attends kindergarten, and since I was told that this child only watches cartoons at home, I admonished the child, saying, "Stop watching so many cartoons, hurry up and learn to read, and read the Bible a little too, all right?" One day I asked this child what the older boys had done that day, and the child told on them, saying that the older boys had not studied at all and had only been on the computer. And then the child said that the child, for one, had not watched TV and had only studied. In this way, even little children use their heads to their own advantage and tell lies.

Every one of us has probably thought at least once in our lives, "I wish I could live without sinning," or "I want to be

delivered from sin." Though I may look as if I live without any worries, in my school days I, too, agonized a great deal over this problem. Wanting to be saved from sin, I also made constant efforts in my own way. But in the end, I was not delivered from sin, and all I found was myself always bound by sin.

To be saved before God, one must have no sin. In other words, it is not a sinner who is saved; the fact is that only a "righteous person" is saved.

Looking at Romans chapter 8, it says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. This means that for those who are in Jesus Christ, there is never any condemnation of sin. In other words, those who are in Christ have no sin. If sin still remains in us, is that a state of being in Christ, or a state of being outside of Him? It is precisely a state of being outside of Christ.

One cannot be justified by works

In Romans chapter 4, the passage we read today, this word also appears: *"If Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God" (Romans 4:2)*. What does "righteous" mean here? Is it right to say that it means precisely having no sin? Yes, being righteous means having no sin. Yet the Bible clearly says that although Abraham was justified before God, it did not come about by works. Because a person is born a seed of sin from birth and lives committing sin all his life, it is in fact impossible to be justified by works before God.

Can a human being be justified by his own efforts? Never. Think for a moment about whether there is any way sin can be

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removed through effort. Have you ever done fasting prayer? I, too, did fasting prayer in my school days. I held back from what I wanted to eat and strove to keep the set time to the minute. But does the sin in our hearts disappear because we fast like that? It does not.

What about mountain prayer? In cold weather, people cover themselves with a sheet of plastic and cry out all night for the nation or for personal problems. When the plastic rustles in the dark mountains it can be frightening, but no matter how hard one strains in prayer like that, sin is not washed away.

In the past, there were also a great many praise rallies. Countless people gathered in large stadiums, and overcome with emotion, they shed tears and even embraced one another. I, too, served at such places and let myself be swept up in the atmosphere. But such emotional experiences cannot remove sin. There are even cases where sin does not disappear and only the money in one's wallet disappears.

When I was in high school, I once went to a rally with a friend, and my friend, so overcome with emotion, gave even all of his fare for the way home as an offering. I remember that in the end we had a hard time finding the fare to get home. Even when we become emotionally fervent like that, sin still remains in us.

I, too, went to the mountains and prayed, pleading with tears. After a good cry, one's heart may feel refreshed. In going to church, I often see the sisters praying and weeping until they are hoarse and then saying that they have received grace. But no matter how much one weeps, sin itself does not disappear.

Some people try to wash away their sins through volunteer work or good deeds. They try to lighten their guilt by helping at facilities for the disabled or by doing laundry at orphanages for seven or eight years. But what even those who have done such

noble work confess in the end is the fact that sin still remains in their hearts.

The Bible says that Abraham was justified. In other words, Abraham received the remission of sins. But it says that this did not come by works; it was only by faith that he was justified, that is, declared to be without sin.

It says, *"'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin'" (Romans 4:7–8)*. What this word emphasizes is the fact that none of us can be justified through human rightness or works. No matter how much a human being tries and strives to wash away his sins by himself, sin still remains.

Looking at Jeremiah 2:22, it says, *"For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, Yet your iniquity is marked before Me, says the Lord GOD" (Jeremiah 2:22)*. Sin is never something we can wash away by ourselves. Do you want your sin to remain as it is, or do you want to become righteous? If even the smallest bit of sin remains before God, that person can never be saved. In the Gospels, too, Jesus sternly said that one would by no means come out of prison until he had paid the price of sin down to the last penny.

Every human being must without fail resolve the problem of his own sin before God. The solution is not my own efforts or my upright conduct. It is only through the righteousness of God that we are justified before God. God has given us that righteousness through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He has remitted all our sins.

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Find the way to the remission of sins in the sin offering

As the word we read earlier said, blessed are those whose sins are remitted and covered; then how on earth can one receive the remission of sins? To find the answer, let us look at the word of Leviticus 4:27 through 31.

"If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and is guilty, or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. Then the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the remaining blood at the base of the altar. He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him" (Leviticus 4:27–31).

In Leviticus, the law of sacrifice appears. This law of sacrifice is a law for resolving the problem of sin that lies between God and man and for being reconciled again. The Bible says that when one of the common people carelessly broke a commandment of God and incurred guilt, if he came to realize that sin, he was to bring a female goat without blemish as an offering.

The wages of sin is death, and the Bible says, *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22)*. It also said, *"The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11)*. The

heart of these words is the principle that the price of sin must without fail be paid with life.

Some people say that if one prays with floods of tears and diligently cultivates one's mind, sin disappears. But what does the Bible say? As the word of Jeremiah we just confirmed says, even if one uses much soap, that iniquity only remains as it is before God.

Then with what must the price of sin be paid? The price of sin can be paid only with life. When we have realized the fact that we have sinned before God, the Bible says to bring a female goat without blemish. And the person who sinned performs the "laying on of hands" on the head of that sin offering. The laying on of hands means placing both hands on the head of the animal.

Looking at Leviticus 1:4, it says, *"Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:4)*. Here the term "laying on of hands" means "to be passed on," in other words "to be transferred." It means that my sin is passed on to the offering and planted in it. When hands are laid on the head of this sacrificial offering, only then is the sin that was in our hearts moved over to the offering.

Therefore, as the word of Leviticus 1:4 says, only when hands are laid on does God gladly accept that offering, and that offering becomes the sacrificial offering of atonement for him. What happens to sin when hands are laid on? The sin that was on us passes on to the offering in a flash. Now the sin is on the head of the sacrificial offering, not on me.

The Bible explains this process in detail. It says, *"If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and is guilty, or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as*

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his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. Then the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the remaining blood at the base of the altar. He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him" (Leviticus 4:27–31).

After passing on sin through the laying on of hands, what does one do? That sacrificial offering must be offered to the Lord. To offer the sacrificial offering means to kill it. This is because the price of sin must be paid with life. Originally, it is I, the one who sinned, who deserve to die, but it is fitting that the goat that has had my sin passed on to it is offered to the Lord in my place. Jesus, too, because He had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, offered His own body to God as the sacrificial offering by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross in our place.

To sum up, there are several essential elements in the sacrifice of atonement for receiving the remission of sins before God. First, there must be an offering without blemish. Second, sin must be passed on through the laying on of hands. Third, the offering must be killed and its blood shed. After that blood is put on the horns of the altar and poured out at the base of the altar, the offering is burned and the sacrifice is offered. This appeared in the daily sacrifices of the Old Testament age.

The sins committed daily and the Day of Atonement

Dear fellow believers, do we, however, commit sin only once in our lives? Is there anyone who commits sin only once a day? If anyone says so, that is absurd. Human beings are beings in whom greed rises up and lust is stirred at everything they see. Even walking down the street, if something catches your eye, doesn't your heart turn toward it on its own?

The sisters are the same. Looking at a handsome actor in a drama, they even think that he is better than their husbands, and in their hearts they harbor all kinds of greed and lust. Because we are beings of evildoing, it is only that we ourselves do not realize it; we live committing countless sins even in a single day. When the weather turns warm and people in showy clothes begin to appear, our hearts are captivated without our even knowing it.

It is because we human beings are, as such, seeds of sin who cannot help but live committing sin all our lives. There are many who commit many sins in a day and yet live without any great realization of it. This kind of life is not a problem of modern people alone, but a problem our ancestors of old went through exactly as we do.

Let us look at the word of Leviticus 16:6 through 10.

"Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the

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LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:6–10).

The word of Leviticus chapter 16 that we just read is the statute concerning the "Day of Atonement," on which a whole year's sins were remitted once and for all.

In verses 29 and 30 that follow, it is written as follows: *"This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD" (Leviticus 16:29–30).* The Bible is speaking of the law by which all the sins committed during a year were remitted once and for all through this sacrifice.

Here Aaron appears. He was the older brother of Moses and the high priest. The office of "high priest" means the "representative" of that people. Of course, in that age there was the great servant of God named Moses, but in the matter of offering sacrifices before God, the one who represented the people of Israel was none other than Aaron the high priest. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

We must have the same faith as Abraham

< Romans 4:1–11 >

“What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: ‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.’ Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,”

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Faith is relying on God

There is something that the Bible regards as most important, speaks of as most important, and also requires of us as most important. It is faith. The Book of Romans, passing through chapters 1 and 2, speaks of faith continuously in chapters 3 and 4, and on through chapter 8. This means that it is emphasizing faith repeatedly. Today's passage also speaks of faith, taking up Abraham. It says that Abraham believed God, and God regarded his faith as right. You and I, who live in the New Testament age, also need this kind of faith.

Faith means relying. If there is a strong person, we rely on him, and if there is a person with power, we rely on him. The Bible calls such relying faith. When we say we believe in God, it means that in many areas we seek God's help and rely on God. The one who represents the people of faith in the Old Testament is Abraham. God appeared to Abraham and spoke to him, and Abraham believed the word God had spoken. This means that he relied on God and believed that it would come to pass just as He had said. He believed that God does not lie, that He is faithful, and that He speaks the truth.

The hometown where Abraham grew up was a place where everyone served idols, and Abraham's family was such a family, too. But Abraham knew the God whom his ancestors of old had believed in and believed in that God, and when God spoke to him, he believed that word. When God said, *"Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1)*, Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans. God had not even set a destination for him, telling him where to go. Just as the word says that Abraham *"went out, not knowing where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8)*, he did not know where he was going, but because God told him to, he went.

Also, God told Abraham, who had no child, that He would give him a child through the body of his wife, and Abraham believed that word as well.

Looking at the circumstances at that time, it was not something that could be believed. His wife Sarah was old and advanced in years, and conceiving a child is something possible only when one is young; at that age it was utterly impossible. Nevertheless, Abraham believed, because God had said it, even something utterly impossible for his wife. The Bible calls this faith. His faith was right, and he received a reward for that faith. And the word says that you and I, who live in the New Testament age, will also be blessed and acknowledged exactly as Abraham was if we believe in God and the word God has spoken. We, too, must believe according to the word in the salvation God has accomplished. It is to rely on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and then rose again from death.

Believing in what Jesus Christ did is the faith of Abraham

In the Old Testament age, God was called Yahweh. It means the God who exists of Himself, the God who was not made by anyone but exists of Himself, the God who created all things. The people of Israel called God that, and in the Bible it is written as the LORD God. But how can we believe in this God Yahweh? When the time came, God put on human flesh and came to this earth, and two thousand years have passed since then. In the name Jesus Christ, the word Jesus means Savior, and the word

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Christ means the Anointed One. That is, it means that He is God; that He is the High Priest who bore the sins of mankind on His own body, received the judgment, and saves us; and that He is the Prophet who reveals and teaches this truth to us. The one who believes in what this Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth—that is, in His bearing our sins by receiving baptism from John, His dying on the Cross, and His rising again from death and becoming our Savior—the one who believes in what He did is a person of faith like Abraham. Therefore, like Abraham, such a person can pray to God, receive answers to what he prays for, receive help though it is not visible to the eye, receive God's protection, do God's work and righteous work, and in the world to come be with God forever and receive all the blessings God enjoys. It is to believe together with this that Jesus, because He had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of sin with the blood He shed on the Cross by receiving that judgment in our place.

The Bible says that a person who has faith receives all of these things together. It calls a person who believes in what Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth a person who believes in God, a person who has received the remission of sins from God, a person who has received eternal life from God, a person who can do God's work, a person who can pray to God—that is, a person who has become a child of God. If we say we know and believe Jesus Christ as God, how do we receive the remission of sins by believing in Him? To become a child of God, one must have all his sins remitted, and that, too, is received by faith. One has only to believe in what Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth. He is God and our Savior, and as our Savior He put on human flesh and came to this earth, bore our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in our place, and as the *"Lamb of*

God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), bearing the sin of the world, He went to the Cross and was nailed to it, shed His blood and died in our place, and received the judgment for our sins; He died and rose again on the third day, is alive even now, and will come again. The one who believes in this work the Lord did when He came to this earth is called a person of faith.

"The blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works"

Then how do we receive the remission of sins? The apostle Paul explains this by citing the faith of Abraham. The word says, *"For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (Romans 4:3)*. It says that when Abraham believed God, his faith was acknowledged as right. Then in the New Testament age, how do we receive the remission of sins, and what kind of person is a blessed person? The word goes on to say, *"Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin'" (Romans 4:4–8)*. This speaks of being blessed and receiving the remission of sins through faith in Jesus Christ, who is our God—of that faith by which our sins are remitted, made completely clean, as white as snow, and of that blessed person.

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The apostle Paul explains this as follows. If I go to someone else's house, work, and receive money, that money is a due reward I have received, because I received it for working. I cannot say that the person generously gave me money as a gift. But suppose I went to someone else's house and did no work at all, and yet the person gives me money. I have done no work, yet he gives me money, saying that I worked hard. If I have received that, I can say that I have received a gift.

This word means that, in believing in Jesus Christ, who is our God and who has removed our sins, if we say that we have been saved by doing something—by doing many good deeds, keeping the law well, and living well before people and before God—then it is not something truly obtained by faith. Believing in what God has done is faith, and believing in what God has said to us is faith; so if someone says that he has been saved from sin by believing in Jesus and also doing many good deeds, that is a fraud. If it is said that our good works are added even in the slightest to our being saved from sin, that is all a fraud. Sin is failing to live according to God's will before God, and if one has even a speck of sin, one goes to hell, and if one has sin as much as a boulder, one also goes to hell; it is the same either way. Because we human beings are already born sinners from birth, born as seeds of sin, we go to hell even if we do not commit a single sin after being born. That is God's law. If there is sin, it is hell, no matter what.

That is why the word says that to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. For one who has worked to receive wages is perfectly fair and right. The master is paying what he rightly owes the worker, that is, paying a debt; it is not giving it as grace. But if one has received it without having worked, that is grace and a gift. The salvation we have received before God is exactly like that. We have done no good work

before God, done no kind deed, and done nothing at all. Yet God promised us human beings even before you and I were born, and just as He promised that He would come to save us, Jesus Christ came to this earth as the Savior in human flesh, and when He turned thirty, as promised, He bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, bore the sin of the world and went and was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for sin, and died and rose again, and so saved us. God did that work for us, and we now hear that fact. If we hear it and believe that fact, we are saved. That is precisely faith.

Even without seeing with our eyes or hearing directly with our ears, if we now believe, rely on, and hold on to what has been told to us through the word of God—the fact that was accomplished, the work God did—that is precisely faith, and so we receive the remission of sins. That person has done nothing. To go to the kingdom of heaven and to receive the remission of sins, one cannot make any effort, nor does it work by doing so. Nevertheless, though we have done nothing, God, loving us one-sidedly, has one-sidedly removed our sins, received the judgment for our sins, and saved us from sin. If someone believes that, that person is a person of faith. He has become a righteous person merely by hearing with his ears, seeing the Bible with his eyes, and believing with his heart. The whole Bible speaks of this, and the entire New Testament speaks of this.

So what did David say about the blessedness of the person whom God acknowledges as righteous apart from works? He said that such a person has received the remission of his lawless deeds. Lawlessness is this: there are many things God has said through the law, “Do this,” and “Do not do that,” and in relationships with people, too, there are many things He has said to do and not to do, and failing to keep these is all lawlessness. Everyone who commits sin and puts it into action goes to hell.

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Merely harboring in one's heart what God has said not to do is already committing sin, and that is called lawlessness. To such people it was said, *"'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin'" (Romans 4:7–8)*. The blessedness of having one's lawless deeds remitted is not wages we have earned by working. It is a gift that Jesus gave by paying the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rising again from death, because He had all the sins of the world, including our lawless deeds, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John.

When God looks at us, we are born sinners from birth and, being lacking, always live committing sin; we commit sin until we die and cannot keep the law perfectly either. But a person of faith has one thing: he believes in God. That is, he believes that Jesus Christ is our God, that He bore our sins, that He received the judgment for our sins, that He died on the Cross in our place, and that He rose again to make us live and is alive even now. If we believe with our hearts in that work God did, we have become people of faith, people of faith like Abraham. So this believer is blessed like Abraham, is acknowledged like Abraham as a person who spreads blessing, a person who shares out blessing, and has received such blessing. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is your God and your Savior, that He bore your sins, that He received by being nailed to the Cross the judgment for all those sins for which you would go to hell, that He bore that eternal death and died, and that He rose again on the third day and gave new life to us who believe? This is precisely faith.

Faith is conveyed through born-again people

Explaining this is an extremely difficult thing. Even if you gathered ever so many theologians and told them to explain it understandably, they could not. Even if you told them to write a book such that a person who clearly has sin would have that sin vanish completely upon reading that one book, or told them to preach such news, they could not. Christian books are endlessly many, but even after reading all of those books, people do not come to faith. When one hears, from what kind of person does faith come? When one hears the word preached by a born-again person, a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, or reads it in writing, faith is carried in it and enters the heart and soul of the one who receives it. That Abraham received this blessing means that faith is conveyed through Abraham, and what are called the servants of faith refers to this medium, that is, this connecting link. A person who is not born again, even if he can say the words accurately, cannot speak concretely, in detail, and in a way that hits home. Because he knows it only doctrinally, he may think that the saying that those whose lawless deeds are remitted and whose sins are covered are blessed means merely that sins are remitted. To put it precisely, it means that we have all the wrongs we commit remitted—everything we do wrong as we are born from our mother's womb and open our eyes and live day by day.

Through whom? By hearing, believing, and holding on to the news of that salvation by which Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved us through the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all sins and all wrongs are completely washed away. That is what it means to receive the remission of lawless deeds. A theoretical person can explain it up to a certain point, but all the wrongs you commit in your lives in thought, in heart, and in deed

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are lawlessness and violations of God's law, and the way to have them all remitted is to be saved and become righteous by believing in what Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth, what that Savior did for you and me. It is to receive the same blessing as Abraham. The news of salvation that a born-again person preaches is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is to hear and believe the news that Jesus, who bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death.

So faith is conveyed. God said to Abraham, *"I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you" (Genesis 12:3)*. If one knows this only as a symbol, that is all there is to it, but if we look into it in actual life, it means that if one believes what Abraham says, since it is the word of God, one is blessed before God just like Abraham, and the one who persecutes and curses Abraham is exactly the same as one who persecutes and curses God. We receive both blessing and curse through a person who is the model. That model is Abraham, and through those among his descendants who have the same faith as Abraham, we are blessed or cursed by meeting such a person.

The work we do, too, is God's work if we do it for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is, we are to do it as if doing God's work. If we do it faithfully, do it by faith, and do it while praying, God sees it and helps us. God not only accomplishes the work through such a person but also blesses him. It is in order to make him bear more fruit. The Lord, likening it to a vine, said, *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2)*. When a vine bears fruit, the farmer gives it more fertilizer, and when a branch does not bear fruit and becomes diseased and spreads the disease

to those beside it, he cuts it off and throws it away. People do the same when they farm. So if there is something we have done wrong, we can first go to God and acknowledge the wrong with the faith that receives into our hearts and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, what Jesus Christ did, have all those sins remitted by that faith and shake them off, and, saying that even though we could not do it until now, since we have failed once we can do better tomorrow, we can serve God well.

Circumcision is the cutting off of sin

The word again says, *"'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin'" (Romans 4:7–8)*. The Bible here points out one more thing, and I, too, will briefly touch on it. Are we fashioned as sinners from our mother's womb and born as sinners, or do we become sinners by breaking the law after we are born? It is the former. The apostle Paul speaks of this in terms of before and after receiving circumcision. The people of Israel received circumcision. The word circumcision means to cut off, to cut away. This circumcision refers to Jesus Christ's coming and cutting off sin by bearing all our sins through the baptism He received from John, dying on the Cross, and rising again from death to save us. It means that we are to receive in our hearts the circumcision that cut off sin in this way. Sin has been cut off from us because Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for that sin in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross.

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The Bible explains our becoming righteous by faith as follows. Abraham was a person who had already lived before Moses received the law, that is, the two tablets of stone, in the Wilderness of Sinai in the Old Testament age. When God appeared to Abraham and told him to leave his country, his family, and his father's house, he left; when God told him to build an altar on the way, he built an altar; and so in the end he entered the land of Canaan. This tells us something spiritual. Before Abraham knew the law, God spoke, and Abraham believed what God had said to him. Therefore his faith was acknowledged, he was acknowledged as right, and he was blessed by God. The word says, *"How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised" (Romans 4:10)*.

We, too, become sinners by breaking the law. Of course, when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have fellowship, we have no choice but to have fellowship through the law. When we meet a sinner, we have no choice but to speak using the law, saying, "God has set the law like this—are you breaking this law or not?" But the real truth is that we were made in sin from the time we were in our mother's womb. David speaks of this, saying, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)*. And so David was a blessed person before God. It was said that those whose lawless deeds are remitted and whose sins are covered are blessed. David committed many sins, and that was wrong, but all of that, too, was remitted, and his sins were covered. Who covers all sins? Jesus Christ bore all our sins and saves us completely.

So when the devil points his finger at us who believe in what Jesus Christ did and tries to judge us, Jesus Christ says, "For this person I bore all this person's sins, I received all the judgment,

and I bore this person's death as well. I have given new life. What is it to you?" We have certainly done wrong. But even though we did wrong, the Lord bore all that sin and bore all those lawless deeds we committed, so what business is it of the devil? The Lord speaks for us and defends us like that as our Savior, and in reality we have no sin. Because Jesus Christ has saved us with the substance of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, even before we believed, our sins were all passed on to Jesus Christ through the baptism He received from John. They have all gone away and have all been judged. Therefore, by our believing that fact, sin is completely gone. This is having received circumcision.

But the law came after circumcision; do we become righteous by practicing the law? Even if one keeps the law well, one cannot become righteous, and even if one received circumcision once a day in this present age, one could not become righteous. It was explained using Abraham as an example. I believe it was explained that if we have the same faith as Abraham, we receive love and blessing from God.

Believe in the present tense at all times

Why am I suddenly talking about this kind of faith? It is because there are many who know the gospel of the water and the Spirit well but do not know faith well. This is faith. Faith is believing with the heart. It is said, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. What we hear with our ears and see with our eyes must be the word of God. We are saved only when we hear with our ears, see with our eyes, and grasp with our hearts what Jesus Christ did and His word; it does not come about by our own thoughts.

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Thoughts must be set aside. Even before we were born on this earth, God already loved you and me, determined to remove all your sins and mine, came long ago and bore all your sins and mine by receiving baptism from John, received all the judgment, and rose again from death, and so became the Savior of you and me. He removed your sins and mine and made us righteous. If we now hear this news and receive it with faith in our hearts, saying, "That is right. I thank You, God, for doing so," we become righteous like Abraham and become people with right faith. I hope you will become such people of faith and be blessed. I hope God will give all of you this kind of faith.

Why am I saying this now? It is because we must have faith in these last days. Your works are of no use, and your efforts, and your living for the Lord, have nothing to do with your salvation or the remission of your sins. God, loving you, came to this earth to make you righteous, to make you workers, and to make you people of the kingdom of heaven, and saved you and me from sin. That God is none other than Jesus Christ. What Jesus Christ did, what He did through the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is the work that saved you and me. I hope you will know and believe that fact. What we must hold on to in our hearts now is also what Jesus did. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our past and future sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, then paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, we believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit today as well.

Please do not say, "I believed long ago and have already been saved. I am just listening to what is being said now." That is extremely dangerous. Please believe in the present tense at all times. Why is that? Because we human beings are weak. At that time you knew only that much and that was what was needed,

but the Bible is vast. Though you may have known it, you may not know well when it will be that you truly receive it in your heart, acknowledge it, and believe it. I know that clearly, but you may not know it well. Being still young, you have hardly ever suffered or struggled because of sin, and since you have been in the church from childhood, you have always heard that word and believed it, and because that word is spoken every day and seems likely to go on being spoken and to go on forever, you may think it tiresome. Please do not do that. Please believe in the present tense, right now, at all times. Then faith is built up and built up. Just as it says, *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52)*, when faith is built up and built up, wisdom also arises and faith keeps growing.

Then you become a person who can share out faith, a person who can share out God's blessing, and a source of blessing. I hope you will become such people. Please believe well. If you believe today, believe tomorrow, and keep on believing, later sprouts come up on their own and good fruit is borne on its own, and God's blessing comes upon you, and by our being blessed we become those who share this blessing with others as well. I give thanks that God has given us such blessing. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

We are saved by faith

< Romans 4:16–25 >

“Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, ‘I have made you a father of many nations’) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. And therefore ‘it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.”

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One becomes an heir of the kingdom of heaven only by faith

This word, as you know well, is a word that speaks of the righteousness of God by which we are saved before God through faith. The apostle Paul said that we are saved by faith. What do we obtain by faith? By believing the word God has spoken, we are saved and God's good is accomplished. To explain this, he takes up Abraham and other forefathers of faith and explains.

Looking at this word, it says, *"Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all" (Romans 4:16)*. It says that becoming a child of God comes by faith so that it might be according to grace. That is, one becomes an heir of the kingdom of heaven only by faith. It does not come by keeping the law, nor by living a good religious life, nor by living a good life oneself, nor by inheriting the lineage of the people of Israel of the Old Testament and being born in the fleshly line of Abraham; it comes only by faith. Faith that believes in what? Faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It comes only by the faith that believes the truth that God has removed our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why the apostle Paul said, *"It is of faith that it might be according to grace" (Romans 4:16)*. The grace of inheriting the kingdom of heaven comes from the salvation Jesus accomplished. Since Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to receive that judgment in our place and rose again from death, that inheritance has been given to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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What kind of faith was Abraham's faith

What kind of faith was Abraham's faith? When God told Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice, Abraham really took his son along as the sacrifice, bound him, and was about to kill him. Abraham took Isaac with him as God had commanded, bound him on the altar, and took the knife to offer him as a sacrifice. He believed that God would surely fulfill His promise, even if Isaac died. Because God had promised Abraham that He would make his descendants as many as the stars of heaven, he had the faith that, believing this, even if he did so, God would bring his son back to life and would surely make his people many.

Thinking that because Abraham had this kind of faith he had his faith acknowledged by God, there are even people who, when someone has died, do not bury the body and leave the corpse as it is, saying that it will rise again in three days. Abraham's faith in God was not like that. Abraham was one who knew God and had met God, and one who believed the word God had spoken. Some people think strangely of God and say that a tree is God, a stone is God, the moon is God, and a star is God, and that there are all kinds of gods, but God is the One who exists of Himself, who created the heavens and the earth. God said to Moses, *"I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14)*. The One who exists of Himself is God. His name is Yahweh. Yahweh, the One who exists of Himself—He is God, and all the rest are created things.

Abraham believed like that. Abraham hoped where there was no hope and believed where it was impossible to believe. He received and believed the word God spoke when He led him outside, had him look at the multitude of stars in the sky, and said, *"So shall your descendants be" (Genesis 15:5)*. Until he was ninety-nine years old, Abraham had no child born of his

wife Sarah. God said to Abraham, *"I will certainly return to you according to the time of life, and behold, Sarah your wife shall have a son" (Genesis 18:10)*. Abraham thought to himself, "It has been ten, twenty years since my wife's menstruation ceased, and how could He give me my own child through my wife, who is so old that her back is bent? I have never heard of an old woman bearing a child." Such was human thinking. But when God spoke, Abraham believed, and he hoped where there was no hope. It was something that could not be by human thinking, but he believed because God had spoken.

The child he obtained because he believed is none other than Isaac. Isaac means laughter. There was laughter for sheer joy, and because he was a child obtained after hearing an unimaginable word, it is laughter. We who believe the word like Abraham believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. We rely on the word that Jesus, who bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death.

One becomes righteous by the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Our receiving the remission of sins and becoming righteous is by faith. This comes only by faith. It is not by our keeping the law well, nor by our living a good life, but only by faith. What kind of faith? The faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that God has removed our sins—it came about only by that faith. Because we believe this, we have been saved. Therefore, faith is salvation.

God has removed the sins of you and me in this world

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through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What happens if we believe this? We are saved by faith. Because we have been saved by faith, we become heirs of God. To be an heir of God is to live forever with God in what God has planned and made and to enjoy all that God has. That is an heir. Just as the one who will inherit what is yours is your heir, we are heirs of the kingdom of heaven who will inherit what is God's. We have become heirs of the kingdom of heaven by faith. We are those who will inherit the kingdom of heaven, those who will live forever in the kingdom of heaven as children of God. How did we become such people? It came about by faith.

Once again, let me say that our becoming heirs of God is not by keeping the law. Then is it all right not to keep the law? It is not so. The law itself is law, it is right, and it is in itself the standard of truth. It is the good standard by which one can discern that this is good and that is evil. Therefore, salvation is not obtained by deliberately not keeping it and disregarding it. Nor, however, is salvation obtained by keeping the law well. We are saved only by knowing and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given us. It means that we become children of God by believing that the Lord came to this earth by the water and the Spirit and saved us.

That is why believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is important. What is it that God has given to mankind? It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then where is the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Let us look at the word of the Gospel of John. Jesus said to Nicodemus, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. He said that one must be born again of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is our salvation. It is that salvation by which Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross,

and rose again from death and so removed our sins—the truth that removed our sins. By believing in it we have been saved. This is what the apostle Paul was talking about. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, no sin remains in us. Since Jesus received the judgment for that sin in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in is the sure basis of the remission of sins.

To depart from the word is to have departed from God

There are people who ask where the words "the water and the Spirit" literally appear here, and such people are precisely the spiritually blind. Why would there be no word of the water and the Spirit here? Did it not say that we believe in the God of Abraham? What do you and I believe in order to be saved? Does God appear in person, call us, and speak to us? He does not do so. If there is something that appears that way while claiming to be God, you should know that it is Satan the devil and drive it away in the name of Jesus Christ.

To depart from the word is to have departed from God. Because this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word of God, by believing and knowing in this way we can know all of what God requires of us, what He says, and what He has commanded. That is why the Bible is called a letter God has sent to us. If we look at this word, we know everything. The gospel of the water and the Spirit written in that letter makes clear the object of faith. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our offenses, transferred to Him once and for all

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through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death, and so He has made us righteous.

"Who was delivered up because of our offenses"

That is why the last verse of this passage says, *"Who was delivered up because of our offenses" (Romans 4:25)*. Jesus was delivered up because of our offenses. It means that Jesus came to this earth as the sacrificial lamb and was delivered up. God the Father sent the Lord out to this earth, had Him receive baptism from John, and had Him bear all the sins of you and me. So the Lord bore our sins and came to shed His blood and die on the Cross. It says, *"And was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25)*. In order to remove our sins completely and perfectly and to fulfill all righteousness, He had all our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He acknowledges those who believe that He has removed sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit in this way as perfect and certain. He acknowledges them as children of God, and it was said that there is no longer anything to be oppressed by or afraid of because of sin. He has made all sins to be no more and has placed us in the grace of God.

Jesus Christ, during His thirty-three years of life on this earth, received baptism from John at the Jordan River, bore our sins and went to the Cross and died, and rose again from death. He rose again in order to remove our sins and justify us. And He is alive even now. Because He who removed our sins lives forever, if we believe in Him and in what He did, we are delivered from sin forever and become children of God. Those who believe have

become so. This is an amazing truth. This is what the apostle Paul is talking about.

Cast off your own rightness and hold on to the salvation God has given

Dear fellow believers, could you and I really have become people without sin? How lacking you and I are! *"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25)*. God the Father sent His Son Jesus to this earth and had Him receive baptism from John, and so had our sins transferred to Him, and He had His Son be nailed to the Cross and die, and so did away with our judgment. We have been saved by believing this. It is not that we have been saved because we did something well, nor that we are saved just by saying we believe in Jesus Christ; it is because God removed our sins and made us sinless that we have become those who are saved by faith. Therefore, we must cast off our own rightness, must not make keeping the law well our own righteousness, must not put forward our being upright, and must at all times honestly acknowledge our own shortcomings before God and at all times hold on to and believe in the salvation God has given us. What we must hold on to is not our own rightness but the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross, and then rose again from death, we must place our assurance in that salvation.

God, You alone are right, and You alone are truly our Savior and the Lord to whom we give thanks. We must believe that He is the Lord of judgment and the Lord of truth. So we must know

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and believe that by faith we become heirs of God and children of God.

Become a servant to what is right

Whatever it may be, to benefit other people one must do a great deal of research. And to benefit other people, sacrifice is needed. If one tries to live only for oneself, one loses everything one has, but the one who benefits others enjoys abundance.

Now that we have received the remission of sins by faith, to what should we become servants? Should we become servants of sin, or servants to righteous work? We should become servants to righteous work. Though we are sometimes weak and there are times when we commit sin, because we have received the remission of sins by faith, we can do what is right at any time. I hope all of you will become servants to what is right. If you give yourselves to what is right, God leads you on a more upright and blessed path. Giving ourselves to righteous work is because we are thankful for the grace we have already received. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world, our sins of course included, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and made us live, we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit serve by that grace.

I desire that all of you believe in God's gospel of the water and the Spirit and give yourselves to God's righteous work. Awake or asleep, it is all about spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are truly the salt. By all means, I hope that the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we serve will be spread more widely and more abundantly. ✉

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CHAPTER

5

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The reason to rejoice in God

< Romans 5:1–11 >

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

Having been justified, enjoy peace

Even after we have received the remission of sins, difficulties come into our lives. When the thought arises, "If God loves us,

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why is it so hard?" we easily judge the love of God by the circumstances before our eyes. But Paul does not say that he rejoices because all difficulties have disappeared; he says that we, who have been made at peace with God through Jesus Christ, rejoice even in tribulations. Only when we know where that joy comes from can we also walk by faith in the life that follows receiving grace.

Let us read verses 1 and 2. *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1–2)*. Paul begins this exhortation with the word "therefore" because he is speaking on the basis of the righteousness of God he has spoken of up to chapter 4, that is, the salvation Jesus has already accomplished. That salvation is what Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John and having the sin of the world, even our sins, all passed on to Him, by shedding His blood on the Cross and paying the price of that sin, and by rising again from death. Since God has removed our sins in this way and we have become righteous by believing in that salvation, there is now no reason to live avoiding God because of the judgment for sin. This is not a demand that we first make our hearts calm in order to obtain peace; it is an exhortation to believe in the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished in this way and to come to God.

A person who has sin is afraid of his wrongs being exposed before God. Even when he wants to call on God, he draws back when he thinks of the One who will judge, and he even puts it off, saying that he will come after he has become somewhat better. But we who believe in the righteousness Jesus Christ has given can speak to the Father without hiding our shortcomings. We are bold not because we have no wrongs, but because we

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know the salvation that has remitted even those wrongs, and so we enjoy peace.

Verse 2 says that we have obtained access into the grace in which we stand by faith. Grace is not something we complete little by little with our own strength and enter later; we have entered by faith into the salvation God has already completed and established. It is not that only our name has been changed to "righteous" while we still have sin; it is a salvation that has actually removed sin, and so our hope is not bound to the possibility that our own deeds will get better.

The word about hoping for the glory of God means that the one who has received that salvation looks forward to living with God in the future. The more our lack and our suffering are exposed in our present life, the more we come to know how precious the eternal life and the kingdom the Lord has given are. Therefore, do not put off the peace that has been given to us as something to be enjoyed only in the distant future. Today, too, we can call God Father and ask for His help, and give thanks to Jesus, who has placed us in grace.

A heart that learns hope in tribulation

To say that we have been made at peace with God is not a promise that we will suffer no hardship on this earth. Paul himself went through many tribulations while preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit and following the will of God, so he did not speak of joy without knowing that difficulties come to those who believe. What he looked to was the glory of God, which surpasses the size of any tribulation, and because of that hope he was able to endure the present suffering.

Let us read verses 3 and 4. *"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3–4)*. This word does not speak of tribulation, perseverance, character, and hope as things separate from one another. While we hold on to the promise God has given and endure difficulties, our hearts are made firm, and such a heart comes to know all the more clearly what we are waiting for in the end. That is why, even in the midst of tribulation, hope for the kingdom of God grows.

Perseverance does not mean that we feel no pain. It is to endure, waiting for the kingdom the Lord has promised, even when our strength is lacking and the way ahead is blocked while we serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord not only had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and paid the price for them by shedding His blood on the Cross, but He also overcame death, so the kingdom He has promised cannot be an empty word either. If we regard the difficulties before our eyes as the whole of our lives, our hearts easily give way, but if we believe that life on this earth is not everything and that there is the glory of living with the Lord, we can rely on the Lord even in the midst of today's difficulties.

Character is our hearts being trained while we endure in this way. Getting through one difficulty does not mean that all tribulations are over, but when we meet difficulty again, we return to the word we held on to before. Rather than boasting that we endured because our own strength was sufficient, we come to know all the more the God who guided us in our insufficiency. For our hearts that believe in God to be made firm does not mean that we become more confident of our own ability; it means that we come to put our faith all the more in the Savior.

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Therefore, do not begin by demanding an outwardly smiling face from a person who is going through tribulation. The reason for the joy Paul spoke of lies not in hiding pain well, but in the fact that the Lord has given us a life that will not end with the present pain. We, too, can tell God that our strength has run out and ask for His help, and we can look after the difficulties of those who believe with us and comfort them with the same hope. Perseverance that has hope is different from a life of pretending to be strong on one's own.

The love of God that the Holy Spirit has made known

But how can we know that the hope we have will not end up as waiting in vain? If it were an expectation made up by our own thinking, it might not come true, and if it were something we had to achieve by our own strength, it, too, might collapse when our strength runs out. Paul does not place our hope in such an expectation; he finds its sure basis in the love God has poured out in our hearts.

Let us read verse 5. *"Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us" (Romans 5:5)*. The Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, which have received the remission of sins, and He makes us know the salvation God has given us and the glory we will enjoy in the future. The hope of entering the kingdom of God and living with the Lord is not a thought we made up in order to comfort ourselves; it is the hope God has promised and the Holy Spirit has made us believe. Because it is a promise God has made, it will surely come true, and so this hope does not disappoint.

The love poured out in our hearts is the love with which Jesus Christ saved sinners, that is, the love with which He received baptism from John and had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and then rose again from death. The more we come to know through the word this work the Lord has done for us, the more we come to know that God is not One who has abandoned us but the Father who has Himself saved us. That love did not vanish because a difficult circumstance arose, and so, even when we look only at our circumstances and are discouraged, the Holy Spirit makes us set our hearts on the word of salvation.

Do not try to find the presence of the Holy Spirit in some special experience. Speaking in tongues or an ecstatic feeling does not prove the remission of sins, nor can we judge whether we have received the Holy Spirit by whether our hearts grew hot and then cooled. The evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is having received the remission of sins in our hearts by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John and the Cross. Therefore, rather than striving to regain some sensation, we must believe the word that He has removed our sins and give thanks to the Lord.

A heart that knows this love also opens toward those who have been saved together with us. Because we know that God loved us first, we cannot keep others at a distance, counting only their shortcomings. We come to look after brothers and sisters who are going through tribulation and comfort them with the word, and to preach the news of salvation even to souls who do not yet know the remission of sins. This is not labor to obtain the Holy Spirit by practicing love; it is a life of living in gratitude for the love already received.

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The love already received while we were still sinners

After speaking of the love poured out in our hearts, Paul makes clear when and how that love was revealed. It was not when we had become godly enough to draw near to God that Jesus loved us. When we had no strength to escape from sin on our own and did not even fear God, God, in due time, that is, exactly as He had promised, when the time was fulfilled, sent Christ and saved us.

Let us read verses 6 through 8. *"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6–8)*. Verse 7 is a contrast that makes verse 8 stand out. When a person gives up his life for another, there is a reason, namely, that the other person is righteous or good, and even such a sacrifice is rare. But God gave up His own Son for sinners who did not even fear God, so this love is on an entirely different level from human sacrifice. He did not look for something in us that deserved to be loved and repay us accordingly; rather, in order to give life to us who were under judgment, Jesus Christ died in our place.

We must not think of that death apart from His bearing our sins. Jesus, who received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world, which include our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Since all our lifelong sins are also included in that sin of the world, the Lord has completely accomplished for us the salvation of the remission of sins. The love of God that we meet in the gospel of the water and

the Spirit is this kind of love, which bore our sins and gave up His life.

The word "while we were still sinners" includes us, who are hearing this word now. The salvation Jesus accomplished is not a salvation that was needed only by those who lived in that age; it was the remission of sins that we, who would be born later, needed as well. We received that love before we had done anything for the Lord, so we must not measure how much we are loved on the basis of our own labor.

God did not merely leave us the word that He loves us and leave the judgment for sin to us as it was. Because He gave us life through the sacrifice of His own Son, that love is confirmed not by our guesswork but by the salvation that has actually been accomplished. Do not give up coming to God because you know your sins. It was precisely because of those sins that Jesus gave Himself up, and God has justified us who believe in the salvation Christ accomplished.

His life gives life even to our bodies

If God has saved us, who were sinners, in this way, what has He now promised to us, who have been justified? Paul moves on from the salvation already received to the salvation we will enjoy in the future, and he places that assurance not in our own strength but in the death and the life of Jesus Christ. He makes us look to the life that God, who gave His Son in order to give us life, will grant to those who have been reconciled.

Let us read verses 9 through 11. *"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been*

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reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Romans 5:9–11). The blood of Jesus means that the Savior who bore sin gave up His own life. Because that Savior received the judgment for our sins in our place on the Cross, we have been justified through the Lord's sacrifice and have been delivered from the wrath of God. Just as there is no result without a cause, believe the fact that Jesus was able to shed His blood on the Cross because He had sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John.

Verse 10 says that even when we were enemies, we were reconciled through the death of His Son. We, who had gone against what God had done and had been under sin, have now become children who call God Father. What opened this relationship was not sincerity offered from our side but the sacrifice of Jesus, so even when we discover our shortcomings, we do not avoid God but can ask for the Father's grace.

The word that we shall much more be saved by His life leads us to the risen Jesus. We who have obtained new life by believing in the Lord have the hope that in the future this body, too, will live again. It does not end with the joy of a soul that has received the remission of sins; it is the promise that the Lord will also give life to our mortal bodies and make us live forever in His kingdom. Therefore, the hardship or death we go through in our present bodies cannot be our final conclusion.

The joy in verse 11 is the joy that the one who has obtained this reconciliation enjoys in God. When good things happen, we can give thanks to God; when hard things happen, we can ask for His help; and we can set our hearts on the living Savior beyond the circumstances before our eyes. A person who had been hiding in fear of God has come to live within the Father's

love, so this relationship itself, which we enjoy through Christ, is a great joy.

Where should we now place the heart that doubted the love of God when difficulties came? Before examining our circumstances, remember the love that gave up the Son for us when we were sinners. Jesus, who is God, received baptism from John and bore our sins, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and then rose again from death. Because there is God, who has reconciled us to Himself in this way and has even promised eternal life, we can come to Him without giving up hope even in the midst of tribulation. Even on a hard day like today, enjoy peace with God, and rejoice in God through Jesus Christ, who has given us life. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Not by justification and sanctification, but by faith in the baptism and the Cross

< Romans 5:1–11 >

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

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The doctrine of justification is a logic that God cannot acknowledge

The Book of Romans, from chapter 3 through chapter 8, continually says that we have been justified by faith. Then is what the apostle Paul says the doctrine of justification? It is not. The doctrine of justification says that God calls one who has sin one who has no sin, and that is a logic that God cannot acknowledge.

What the apostle Paul and this Scripture say is not the doctrine of justification but the perfect righteousness that contains the righteousness of God. Calvinism, one school of theology, says that it believes in the theory of justification. It also speaks of the theory of sanctification, which says that one's spirit and body must be sanctified until the very moment one dies. So in Calvinist theology, the completion of salvation is called the theory of sanctification, and it is believed in as a doctrine that could be called the very summit of salvation. The word they take as the basis of the theory of sanctification is this: *"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:30).*

Those who misunderstand the word of the Scripture literally think that the doctrine of sanctification is entirely correct. But does that word really say that the theory of sanctification is correct? It does not. A person's heart and flesh cannot gradually change to become holy and reach sanctification. A person's heart and flesh are not changed without faith in the righteousness of God. A person can become completely righteous when he believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and becomes a person without sin. It is possible for a person's flesh and heart to reach a state without sin when he believes in the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit, which contains the righteousness of God. This is because that righteousness of God is contained in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even a person who believes in Jesus does not get a better character the older he gets. But the righteousness of God grants the remission of sins to those who believe only in the righteousness of God. The perfect righteousness is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment for those sins in our place. Jesus rose again from death and made us people without sin, so that righteousness is perfect.

Fundamentally, the theory of sanctification is a doctrine that says that after one believes in Jesus, one's heart and the conduct of one's body keep changing to become holy, and at the moment of death one is changed to be completely holy. But we must think it over and then believe. How can anyone believe that sanctification is accomplished within the passage of time? Just because a person has believed in Jesus for a long time, does his character become gentle of its own accord and his heart change to become holy? It does not. That is because it is a doctrine of religion built on human logic that has departed from the truth. A doctrine established by a theologian can be wrong at any time, but God is never wrong. The apostles who appear in the Bible said that they had obtained the righteousness of God by faith. Does God call those who believe in Jesus, who have sin, sinless? That is a misunderstanding of the word of God. The idea that God calls a sinner righteous is nothing but a foolish deception. The doctrine that a person who is presently a sinner is called righteous for the reason that he believes in Jesus is an absurd human notion, not the truth. Does it make sense to say that one

has no sin when one has sin? It does not make sense. Being justified by God was possible because all sins are remitted by believing in the righteousness of God.

We obtain the righteousness of God by faith

By believing in what can we obtain righteousness before God? We can obtain it by believing in the redemption of the water and the Spirit that is in our Lord Jesus Christ. By believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, we can receive the remission of all sins and become righteous people without sin. When we have this kind of faith, we can become people without any sin when we go before God the Father. Those who have truly believed in Jesus and become sinless through the righteousness of God acknowledge the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But to say that a person has no sin when he has sin, or that salvation has been given, is the same as taking the name of God in vain. The truth of actually being justified, that is, declared without sin, by believing in God was given to mankind through Jesus.

Is a person who is enjoying peace with God a person who has sin, or a person who has no sin? What would you say? You would naturally say that he is a person who has no sin. A person who has obtained the righteousness of God before God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord carried out will enjoy peace with God forever.

So the person who enjoys peace before God is one who has received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of God. He is a person who has no sin in his heart, not a person who does not believe in the righteousness of God. Do you know the truth that if there is even the slightest sin in a person's heart,

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he cannot enjoy peace with God but remains His enemy? What must a sinner settle first of all when he comes before God? He must settle his sin first of all. What always comes to mind in a sinner's heart? Is it not sin that comes to mind? Is it not sin rising up in your heart that is keeping you from going any further before the presence of God? This shows that there must be no sin between God and us. That is why there was a need to receive the remission of sin once and for all by faith, by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In order to receive the remission of the sins he has committed, a person must believe in the righteousness of God. This is because no sin is remitted by prayer. If there is sin in a person's heart, he cannot go before the presence of God, and he cannot pray. That is why his prayer does not work.

So when a sinner prays before God, does he not first of all beg for his sins to be remitted? But such prayer does not bring reconciliation with God; only by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can all sins be remitted and can one enter the kingdom of God. A sinner must be reconciled to God by having all his sins washed away. Do not think that all your sins are washed away by prayers of repentance. That is because prayers of repentance cannot wash all your sins as white as snow. I want you to know that the way to be reconciled to God by having all your sins washed clean before God is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only after that can you say to God the Father, "Give me this, and give me that." After that, because God is your God, you can become one with Christ. That is why a person's sin, since it blocks reconciliation with God, had to be removed by faith. We had to enjoy peace by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We can enjoy peace with God because the price of sin has already been paid. After Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins, passed on

to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, receiving that judgment in our place, and rose again from death.

Can one obtain sanctification by not committing sin before God? One cannot. Know that we cannot say that we have no sin when we have sin just because we believe in Jesus. Know that those who believe in Jesus must not cover up and rationalize their own sins with the doctrine of justification. Know that the doctrine of justification says that one who has sin is called sinless because of the merit of believing in Jesus, but that it is not so. You must know that whoever believes in that way is one who deceives his own heart and deceives God, and one who degrades Christianity into a worldly religion.

We must know that God is holy, fair, and a God who cannot lie. In the prayer the Lord taught us, He said, *"Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name" (Matthew 6:9)*. This word meant that a person must call God Father after receiving the remission of sins and becoming righteous, for if a sinner who has not even received the remission of sins calls out, "God the Father," then that God would have to become the father of a sinner, which cannot be. You must know this. Do you know the truth that everyone who knows and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes a sinless person without a single sin in his heart? You must know and believe this truth.

Do not look at Jesus with eyes of pity. Those who believe in Jesus in this way are not believing the truth but pitying Jesus. Jesus does not want the kind of faith that sends Him pity and pities His suffering. Know that if people do not believe in the righteousness of God hidden in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is sin in their hearts. Then you may ask, "Do those who believe through the gospel of the water and the Spirit have

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sin?" There is not a single grain of sin in their hearts. They believe that Jesus Christ came to this earth and settled all sins by receiving baptism from John and dying on the Cross. Those who believe in the merit of the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross have obtained righteousness before God, have completely received the remission of sins in their hearts, and have become completely sinless people. Now they have become people whose every sin in their hearts has been washed as white as snow. Let all of us believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which we obtain the righteousness of God, in order to enjoy peace with God. The person who believes in that gospel of the water and the Spirit comes to call God "Abba, Father," and has become a person who actually has no sin. Therefore, whoever has entered into Christ by believing in the truth of the water and the Spirit has become one who has obtained the righteousness of God.

Are you in Christ, or outside of Christ?

Worldly religions say that if you do many good things your sins disappear, or that your sins are reduced, but such theories and doctrines are stories that work only in religion. In Christianity, a person who has sin even though he believes in Jesus has not met Jesus. The person who has entered into Christ is one whose sins in his heart have been washed away by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A sinner is a person who is not in Christ but outside of Him.

Have you entered into Christ? Or are you outside of Christ? Know that whether you are a person who has entered into Christ or a person who is outside of Christ depends on whether or not you obey the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit by

faith. If you have not yet entered, I ask you to look now into the salvation of the truth that is in God and believe. Whether you are a person who thinks you have entered into Christ or not, you need the righteousness of God. A person who still believes in Jesus but has sin in his heart is one who has not met this truth of the water and the Spirit.

Whether or not I have entered into the Lord by believing in the righteousness of God is extremely important, and heaven and hell depend on it. Long ago, at the time of Noah's flood, God told Noah a hundred years beforehand that He would destroy this world. Noah built the ship. Noah proclaimed God's command to people, and for a hundred years he built the ship. During the hundred years the ship was being built, countless people looked into the ark and went away. But those who believed the word God had spoken and entered that ship by faith were only eight. Some would have come in, looked around inside, and gone back. Some, a day before the rain of judgment came, and some, fifteen days before, would have looked around inside the ship through the door and gone back. Noah's ship was built with three stories. Many people may have looked around, but they did not enter by faith.

It is the same in this age. Do you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Some people do not believe. Being outside of Jesus Christ even though one believes in Jesus is evidence that one has not yet met the truth called the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Such people have reason to meet the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The faith that enters into Christ is believing in the work accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in

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our place, and He rose again from death and opened the way of salvation.

Be united with the righteousness of God

Let us look at the word that follows. It says, *"Through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2)*. How does it say we enter into the grace of salvation that God has given? This word, too, says that entering into the grace in which we stand by faith is done by faith.

If we want to enter into the grace of salvation that God has given, we enter by believing the truth in which we stand by faith. The truth in which we stand by faith is this: before we believed in Jesus Christ, before we were even born, God had already planned for us from before the foundation of the world, and when the time came He sent Jesus Christ, and by John the Baptist's giving baptism to Jesus Christ at the Jordan River, all the sin of mankind was passed on to Jesus Christ, and Jesus went to the Cross, was nailed to it, and shed His blood. This is the truth that saves people from sin.

This Scripture says that He has made people righteous through the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross; then does it really tell us that we have no sin when we have sin even though we believe in Jesus, or is it that if we believe in Jesus we truly have no sin? In the Old Testament it says, *"Come now, and let us reason together, Says the LORD, Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18)*. Does a person who believes in Jesus really have no sin? When we believe in the Lord, are our sins really washed as white as snow? As for all sins, if we believe in the gospel of the water

and the Spirit, our sins that are like scarlet are washed as white as snow. And when we believe, are only the sins committed up to that time washed away? Or are even the sins we will commit in the future finished forever by a single act of faith? He said that it is finished once and for all, and it actually became so. It says that though our sins are red like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. It means that it actually becomes so.

If we believe in the Lord, even sins like dark clouds are washed as white as snow. If that is so, then if you believe in Jesus now and still have this sin, have you believed in Jesus wrongly? Of course you have. Then which is correct, the gospel of the Cross or the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Is it correct that one believes in Jesus and has sin, or that one has no sin? It is correct that one has no sin. Then the gospel of the water and the Spirit is correct. Even if a person has run up a large debt on credit, once he has paid it all, he is no longer a debtor. Then, since Jesus came to this earth to save us from sin, received baptism from John and had our sins passed on to Him, and shed His blood on the Cross and removed them, it is correct that we have no sin—how could it be correct that there is sin in our hearts?

If people have sin before they believe in Jesus and still have sin after they believe in Jesus, are they really knowing and believing in Jesus rightly? We know original sin. We know actual sins. Even a person who seemed to have no sin in his heart was revealed through the law to be a sinner, and so became a sinner. A person's sins are recorded in his own heart. And every time he transgresses the law, sin is recorded on the tablet of his conscience, and he becomes a complete sinner. It is correct to say that such a person has become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit through Jesus. One becomes righteous by knowing and believing in the righteousness of God.

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These days, those who have believed in Jesus for a long time say that the longer they believe, the more sins are piled up in their hearts. So they are agonizing over how to remove the sins they have committed. But the truth that gives them salvation from God already stands as the gospel of the water and the Spirit. All the righteousness of God has already been completed. The word tells us to believe that the Lord has become our Savior and that the Lord has removed all our sins. By faith we receive the remission of all sins. Therefore, we obtain access into the grace that God has given. God has completely given us salvation from sin, and if we know and believe this truth, we obtain the grace of entering into the salvation of God. There is no condemnation for the person who has entered into the Lord's righteousness. It says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1),* so there is no sin. For the one who believes in the righteousness of God, no sin can remain in that person's heart. It says, *"Rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2),* so because we have received the remission of sins, only the children of God can obtain and enjoy the kingdom of heaven that God has given us. The righteous rejoice, hoping and longing for the kingdom of heaven that is to come. Confirm in the gospel of the water and the Spirit the grace of salvation that already stands. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, not to mention our sins up to the day we die, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and then rose again from death.

The doctrine of justification is absolutely not the truth but an untruth. The doctrine of justification is not the truth because it says that one has no sin when one has sin. If one believes in Jesus through the doctrine of justification, one commits the sin of

making God a liar. Believers who cannot believe in the righteousness of God believe that Jesus could not remove all their sins, that He removed only original sin and could not remove actual sins. But Jesus has given us the righteousness of God, which removes entirely not only the sin you inherited from your mother's womb but also whatever sins you commit until you reach the grave. Jesus bore all our sins through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment on the Cross, and so He has cleanly removed our sins and trespasses. The Scripture says, *"Even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:5)*. We commit sin until we die. That is why we must know the fact that we obtain salvation by believing in that salvation which Jesus Christ has given us.

"Christ died for the ungodly"

Now let us look at the next word. Here it says, *"Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6)*. This was speaking of our state when we were not even in our mothers' wombs, when we were there but not yet born, when we were born but did not know the Lord, and when we could do nothing but live committing sin until we died and, living like that, could do nothing but go to hell—when we were in such a fate. It means that when we, being such people, had not yet even committed sin, Jesus Christ came to this earth, and He Himself was born in order to remove our sins, received baptism from John, bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death, and so removed my sins and yours.

When our ancestors Adam and Eve sinned, God promised salvation, saying, *"He shall bruise your head, And you shall*

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bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15). The Lord came exactly as He had promised, and for the ungodly He Himself bore the sin of mankind, my sins and yours, through His baptism and died on the Cross, and so He has saved those who believe from sin.

Are we godly? You must know whether or not you are godly. Fundamentally, when you think about yourselves, what kind of people are you? Are you godly people? A godly person means one who is conscious of God and lives trembling in fear of anything that is sin. But the Scripture says, *"Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6)*. This means that Jesus Christ died for you and me, who are ungodly, who commit sin all our lives—for us, when we were still without strength, who commit sin until we die.

In order to save you and me, who commit sin from the time we are born from our mothers' wombs until we die, the Lord came to this earth as He had promised, and just as in the Old Testament the sacrificial lamb received the laying on of hands and had sins passed on to it, in the New Testament Jesus Christ had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and He bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross, and so He has saved us. The Lord received baptism and died for the ungodly. You and I have not been saved because we were godly; we have been delivered from sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Are you godly? It is because we are not godly that the Lord came to save sinners. To be ungodly means that we commit sin from the time we are born until we grow old and die, until we enter the grave.

Then when did He bear the sins of all the ungodly? It was when Jesus, receiving baptism from John, said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, that He bore all sins, and He bore the sin of the

world and was nailed to the Cross and died, receiving the punishment for our sins, and He rose again from death and saved us. Jesus died on the Cross because He had borne the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John. Concerning this death on the Cross, Jesus said, *"My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55)*. It is the food of the soul. Because Jesus had our sins passed on to Him once and for all through that baptism, because our sins were passed on, we have no sin. Because your sins were passed on, you have no sin, and the fact that Jesus Christ bore all the sins of the world, all my sins and yours, once and for all by receiving baptism, and bore the sin of the world and died on the Cross, is our true drink. Because Jesus Christ received the judgment in our place by being nailed to the Cross, our conscience is set at ease when our hearts believe that fact. When did the Lord save us from sin? When we were without strength, Jesus saved us completely through the baptism He received and His blood.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). It says that God demonstrated His own love in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The Scripture speaks here of His death, and it also says, *"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27)*. The reason the Scripture speaks of His death repeatedly is that the baptism Jesus received from John is included in this death. The death of Jesus is because of the baptism Jesus received from John. The Scripture does not repeat every day that Jesus received baptism from John in order to die on the Cross; it speaks of its result.

That the secret of the baptism Jesus received from John has been hidden is the wisdom of God. He has hidden this truth from those who do not acknowledge Him as God. It says that God demonstrated His own love toward us through this truth. We had

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to go to hell because of our sins, and our fate was truly the fate of going to hell, but in order to save us from sin and to demonstrate the love of God, He was born on this earth, came to this earth clothed in a human body, received baptism from John, and died on the Cross, and so He has saved us from sin and death. So, in that He died for us, God has demonstrated His own love toward us.

Because He truly loved us, He saved us from sin so as to make us children of God and to take us to the kingdom of God forever and let us live there for all eternity, and He also gave us the Holy Spirit as a gift and made us children of God. It says that in order to make us people without sin, the Lord Himself came to this earth, received baptism from John, Himself died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He has confirmed salvation to us. He has confirmed with the water and the blood that the Lord truly loved us. Christ's receiving baptism and dying on the Cross confirm that He loved you and me. His coming to this earth was to save us from sin. His receiving baptism was to have all our sins passed on to Him, and His dying on the Cross was His own receiving of the punishment for my sins and yours.

The salvation testified by the water, the blood, and the Spirit

We must think about what fate a person is in from the time he is born. What fate were you and I in from the time we were born? It was the fate of going to hell. How, then, were you and I able to obtain salvation from all sins? Because God loved us, Jesus came to this earth in a human body, received baptism from

John and bore the sin of the world, all our sins, and died on the Cross and rose again from death, and so He has saved us.

Our fate has been changed by believing in the righteousness of God. That is why we obtain salvation by faith. As for that faith—if we ask what that work is which the Lord came to this earth and did—it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord said that only when a person is born again of water and the Spirit can he see and enter the kingdom of God. The Lord came to this earth as a man to save us, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so He fulfilled all the righteousness of God. Jesus became the Lamb of God who received the sin of the world through His baptism and takes it away. And with nails driven into both His hands and both His feet, He poured out all the blood in His heart, paid the price of all our sins in full, and recovered our life for us. That is why we are saved from all sins and obtain new life by believing in Jesus Christ, who is the righteousness of God. In other words, we find again the life we had lost. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and because of those sins He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place, and He rose again from death, so we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have new life.

This is the confirmation of salvation. It is confirmation! If one believes only in the blood of the Cross, only in the gospel of the blood, there is sin in one's heart and it becomes a religious faith. What the Scripture says precisely is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The whole world must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. All those who believe in Jesus and yet have sin in their hearts must come to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit anew and return to that gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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In fact, there is something one would have thought all who believe in Jesus knew well and believed, at least to this extent. But if a test were given asking them to discuss the gospel of the water and the Spirit, very few would be able to answer. And exceedingly few would be able to say precisely how their sins were passed on to Jesus in concrete terms. A person who does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not know how his sins were passed on to Jesus, and therefore he cannot obtain the righteousness of God. He can only guess that Jesus came to this earth and died on the Cross and saved him, and that He seems to have chosen him from before the foundation of the world. He cannot help but conclude, "Seeing that I believe in Jesus, I am one who has been chosen."

Then is there sin in your heart now, or not? If there is sin, you are a sinner, and if there is none, you are righteous. Do sins disappear if you offer prayers of repentance every day? Is there sin in your heart now, or not? If there is sin, what does that mean? Are you in Christ, or outside of Him? It means you are outside. Those who have faith in the righteousness of God are those who believe that Jesus, in order to save us from sin, received baptism from John and bore the sins of all mankind once and for all and saved us once and for all. But a person who believes without acknowledging that truth must turn around and believe again.

That is why the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is needed. The gospel of the water and the Spirit speaks of God's having saved us from sin in that God became a man, came to this earth, received baptism from John, and gave His body over to the Cross and died. So the true gospel is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God, and God, clothed in a human body, came to this earth, received baptism from John, and died on the Cross, and so He has saved you and me. So those who do not know, through the word of Matthew 3:13–17, the

fact that the baptism Jesus received bore all their sins have become unable to truly believe in Jesus. That is why this gospel of the water and the Spirit is important. Whoever ignores this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same as one who ignores God. Whoever does not know and does not believe the truth of this gospel of the water and the Spirit still has sin in his heart.

So let us look once at the word of the First Epistle of John. *"Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV). If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son" (1 John 5:5–10).*

Here it says that He came by water and blood. It says, *"This is he that came by water and blood" (1 John 5:6),* and the Scripture says that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came to this earth, and that having come to this earth, at the age of thirty He received baptism from John and bore all the sin of all mankind, which includes us. And having borne all the sin of mankind, He bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross. He gave His body over to the Cross. His receiving baptism from John was to bear our sins, and His dying on the Cross was to receive the punishment for our sins. What is the evidence of salvation, that God has saved us from sin? It is the water, the blood, and the Spirit. The water refers to the baptism Jesus Christ received, the blood refers to the blood He shed on

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the Cross, that is, His death, and the Spirit refers to Jesus Christ's being God, His being the Son of God.

Be united with the baptism Jesus received

Concerning the baptism Jesus received from John, Peter says as follows. *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*. The water spoken of in this Scripture also speaks of the word, but in substance it testifies that the Word became flesh and came among us and saved us, and that this is the baptism Jesus received.

Why did Jesus, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit on this earth, receive baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty? He received baptism in order to have all the sin of mankind passed on to Him. The water is the sign that saves us, that is, baptism. Of that baptism it says, *"Not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21)*. When Jesus received baptism from John, He Himself bore all the sins we commit in our hearts all our lives, the sins we commit by our deeds, every sin. He received them all through the baptism. So He has cleansed our conscience. Everyone who truly believes this fact is cleansed. That is how a good conscience comes to seek God.

Your conscience and mine can become defiled. And sins are recorded in a person's conscience. How can those recorded sins be washed clean? We can be cleansed by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood. It is done by believing that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins. By believing this truth, the conscience becomes

clean. By believing the fact that Jesus, by receiving baptism, bore everyone's sins once and for all—all those trespasses and sins defiled through our conscience and our deeds, those filthy sins of our conscience—we come to believe that our sins have been passed on to Jesus. That is why it says, *"But the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21)*. The basis on which the conscience becomes clean lies in believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, even the sins recorded in our conscience, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in our place and rose again from death.

It says, *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10)*. Were all your sins passed on when Jesus Christ received baptism from John? They were passed on. Because they were passed on, your conscience is clean. It becomes clean when you come to know the fact that all those sins that weighed on your conscience have been passed on to Jesus Christ. Thereby you come to call God "Abba, Father" and to seek God. Thereby you also come to pray before God the Father. You come to pray to God the Father, saying, "Do this for me, and do that for me," and in the end we come to glorification. We become righteous by faith and live by faith, and become instruments of righteousness that lead many people to what is right. We receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Your conscience will know this better. If you believe in your heart in the baptism Jesus received and His blood, all your sins are washed away.

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Jesus Christ, who reconciled us to God

Let us look at the word that follows. *"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Romans 5:9)*. Is this speaking of a justification by which, even though we believe in Jesus and have sin, He calls us sinless? No. It is not so. God's acknowledging us as sinless is something He does in view of our faith. It is because Jesus bore all our sins and saved us from sin by receiving baptism from John and dying on the Cross, because He actually removed our sins and saved us, because He completely removed our sins, and because we believe that. God acknowledges those who believe this truth, saying, "You have no sin; you are righteous; you are a person without sin; you are a saint; you are My people."

Does He call us righteous even though we believe in Jesus and still have sin? It is not so. Whether a person believes in Jesus or not, if there is sin in his heart, that person has believed in Jesus wrongly, has known Him wrongly, and has sin because he does not know the righteousness of God hidden in the truth. That is why such a person is called a sinner. He is called a sinner because there is sin in his conscience. The conscience of one who has sin in his heart says to him, "You are a sinner." But the person who knows well and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is righteous because there is no sin in his heart. I give thanks that God has made me sinless. Because the Lord has removed my sins, I have no sin. I have become righteous.

The next word. *"For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10)*. Why did Jesus have to die on the Cross when we were enemies? He died because He had borne our sins. Because Jesus

came to this earth and, in order to remove our sins, received baptism from John and bore our sins and died on the Cross, He has saved us from sin. That is why we can be reconciled to God by faith, through the merit of Jesus' having saved us. The one who believes in the righteousness of God is reconciled to God, and the one who does not believe remains an enemy of God and comes to stand before the judgment seat.

That is why, when we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we must without fail believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we believe only in the blood of the Cross, we become sinners once again and become nothing but religious people. If a person believes only in the blood of the Cross as the righteousness of God, then even though he believes every day, the more he believes, the more only sin remains in his heart. So if we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the sins of our hearts are washed as white as snow. In order to have not a speck of shame in our conscience toward God, we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the truth of the water and the Spirit, which contains the righteousness of God.

"And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Romans 5:11). Who reconciled us to God? Jesus Christ reconciled us to the Father. How did He do it? It was by completing that work by which He Himself came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so fully accomplished the righteousness of God. Jesus, as the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him, died on the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death, and so He has saved us who believe in the righteousness of God from sin.

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Now whoever believes in the baptism Jesus Christ received and the blood of the Cross has come to have no sin. Jesus' receiving baptism from John was to bear all our sins, and Jesus Christ's bearing the sin of the world and being nailed to the Cross was to receive the punishment for sin, because He had borne our sins. The person who believes in this way is one who believes in the righteousness of God. That Jesus has become our true Savior and has become the righteousness of God. Those who believe in the righteousness of God have come to be able to go before God without sin at any time by believing in the righteousness of God. Because Jesus Christ has removed all our sins, we have obtained the righteousness of God by faith. Because the righteousness of God has removed all our sins, the sin of the world, and made us righteous, those who believe are happy. Because we have become righteous by believing in that gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has given, we have come to be able to go boldly before God and call God Father.

The One who reconciled us and the Father is Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God the Father. He is also our Savior. The one who believes that Jesus has saved us from sin comes to rejoice in God. And his sins disappear as white as snow. Whoever has even a little sin in his heart is not a child of God. We have learned from this word that the doctrine of justification and the theory of sanctification are not correct.

You probably already know all this. Even so, the reason I have discussed such theological matters is that I could not help discussing them, because the people of the world regard the theory of justification and the theory of sanctification as the truth. Is the doctrine of justification correct? Is it correct that one who has sin is called sinless? It is wrong. Is the theory of sanctification correct? It is wrong. It is not that we believe in

Jesus but live good lives, do many good deeds, and strive, and so are gradually sanctified and changed, and at the moment of death are completely changed and only then fully meet God; rather, only by knowing and believing in the righteousness of God can we go to the kingdom of God.

People fall into a misconception when they see in the Book of Romans the word that we are justified by faith. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul speaks of says that God says, "Righteous, that is, without sin, a righteous person," on the premise of the one who believes that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, and died on the Cross, and so removed all our sins. It says, "You who believe in the righteousness of God have no sin; you are righteous." It is not that He calls a sinner sinless. Those who do not know the Bible well talk of the doctrine of justification. But the doctrine of justification came out of the head of a philosopher.

We have already obtained salvation from all sins by believing in the righteousness of God. Those who know and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have obtained the righteousness of God. Yes, they have. Whenever the Lord comes, we can be held in the Lord's bosom. Obtaining the true righteousness of God was the truth of obtaining the righteousness of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, not a faith that believes in the doctrine of justification. I give thanks to the Lord. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Misunderstood faith, word, sanctification, and law

< Romans 5:1–21 >

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses,

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even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

People who misunderstand the grace in which we stand by faith

The apostle Paul continues to speak about faith in Romans chapter 5 as well. He said, *"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand" (Romans 5:1–2).* That the apostle Paul said we

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have access into this grace in which we stand by faith is a word that is only natural, and it is the truth.

But people who live a religious life without having met Jesus Christ misunderstand this word. To receive the grace of God, one must receive it by faith. What the apostle Paul said is that in order to enter into that grace and receive the gifts and blessings God gives, we must believe in this truth in which we stand by faith, this gospel of the water and the Spirit by which God has saved us. But people misunderstand, thinking that they receive grace by being zealous. They think that if they say amen well and clap well when listening to a sermon, give many offerings, and are zealous, they receive the grace, gifts, and blessings God gives.

But the apostle Paul said that we have access into this grace in which we stand by faith. All the blessings and grace God gives are gifts. Every good gift God gives is received by believing in the word of God. Yet people try to receive grace not by faith but by zeal. Sometimes they try to receive grace by giving a lot of money, and sometimes by putting in a lot of devotion. Because the word of the Bible is the truth, we can believe it just as it is, but when we look at those who have not yet been born again, we can see how much they misunderstand. They hold early morning prayers, are zealous, and are all eyes and ears to receive the grace of God, but they do not know about this grace in which we stand by faith. They do not know this truth.

The grace in which we stand by faith means receiving every good gift God gives through believing in the word of God. Yet because people set aside faith in the word of God and try to receive the grace of God, that is a misunderstanding and a wrong faith. That is why such faith ends up becoming a superstitious faith. With their faith having become superstitious, people are zealous, offer many prayers of repentance, keep the law well day

and night, and, bound to works, think that they must do good works in order to receive blessings, receive grace, and receive gifts.

In fact, people have become like this because they have been deceived by Satan the devil. When a person sins, Satan the devil passes judgment on that sin. He scratches at the heart, saying, "You sinned, didn't you? You will be cursed." Even though what Satan the devil says is not heard as a sound, it is felt very keenly in the heart. Because, when they sin, people feel their conscience scratching at their hearts and judging them, they come to be so zealous.

But the apostle Paul said that our becoming righteous, that is, our becoming without sin, comes about by faith. It is by believing in our hearts in this gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, by which God came to this earth and removed all our sins, and in that salvation by which God has saved us, that we receive the gift of becoming sons of God and the gift of becoming righteous people without sin. The gift of becoming righteous that we receive by faith was accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and He received the judgment for them in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross. Since Jesus rose again from death and made us righteous, that gift is perfect.

The righteous all understand this word when they read it. Because the Holy Spirit is in their hearts, and the Holy Spirit, as their teacher, teaches them everything, there is nothing they do not know. However, the purpose for which we live in this world is to live as workers who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who have not been born again and lead them to receive the good gifts God gives. That is why we must know what they are misunderstanding. We have already believed, but

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we must realize that those who have not yet been born again misunderstand in this way before this word. Trying to receive the blessings God gives without believing in the word of God is a misunderstanding.

Also, what happens to those who have obtained this grace before God, those who have been justified by faith? They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. They rejoice because they believe that the kingdom of God will come in the future and that they will enter and live in that kingdom. And they rejoice even in tribulations. Because we have been saved by believing in the word of God, we rejoice even in tribulations and endure patiently. The word says *"knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3–4)*, and the reason we rejoice even in tribulations is that we have that hope. We endure patiently because it is certain that we will enter the kingdom of God, and that is because the Spirit of God has been poured out in our hearts and is in our hearts.

The salvation in which even the sins we will commit in the future were already borne

And let us see from the word one more thing that people misunderstand. *"For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6–8)*. People misunderstand how the sins they are committing now and the sins they will commit in the future are resolved. They can understand the statement that the sins they committed before believing in Jesus have disappeared, but they ask what is

to be done about the sins they will commit again in the future. So they misunderstand, thinking that if they keep on sinning, they must receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance, and that therefore we cannot become righteous until we die; that even though we have believed in Jesus and been saved, we cannot become righteous.

The reason people misunderstand in that way is that they think the Lord removes their sins day by day, continuously, as an ongoing process. To put it simply, it is because they misunderstand this truth that says, *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)*.

Earlier, too, it said that when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, and the word "still" here refers to the time when we had not even been born yet. When you and I had not yet been born on this earth, had not been born and sinned, and had not lived out our lives, the Lord foresaw and predestined that we would be born. And knowing that we would be born and sin in this world, He was born on this earth in the flesh of a man, bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment on the Cross in our place, and so saved us.

So this salvation is not something that takes place as an ongoing process. The Lord came to this earth to save us, had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John, and received the judgment Himself in our place on the Cross, and so saved all people from sin. Those who believe that Jesus Christ came long ago and already bore all our lifelong sins through that baptism, was crucified and died in our place, and rose again from death, and so saved us perfectly, obtain this salvation. They become righteous. Therefore, we can be justified by faith. The truth of

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the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including our future sins, once and for all through the baptism He received from John and therefore paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, has already been completed.

But because people misunderstand this truth in a fleshly way, they misunderstand the salvation by which God has saved us, with the fleshly thought of how one can become righteous while continuing to sin. That is why the Bible clearly says that it was when we were still without strength, when we were still sinners. Because a person is already a sinner once born through the bodies of his parents, our Lord had already borne all the sin of mankind when we had not even been born, when we were sinners before meeting Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came about two thousand years ago; He was born in order to bear all the sins of all the people of the whole world, whether those who lived before then or those of this age, bore all sins by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again. But because people misunderstand this truth of salvation, they believe wrongly. Even though they believe in Jesus Christ, they become sinners. There are this many things that people misunderstand.

The word also says this. *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12)*. The Bible clearly says that through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and that thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. Yet people misunderstand even how one becomes a sinner. They think that one is a sinner only if one commits sin. But the Bible says that through one man sin entered the world, and that through him all people became sinners. A person became a sinner because sin had already entered his heart,

his soul, before he was born on this earth, and death reigned over those who had become sinners. Yet people misunderstand, thinking that after they are born, they become sinners if they sin and do not become sinners if they do not sin. That is why Jesus Christ, in order to remove our sins, predestined and foresaw that we would be born before you and I were born, came ahead of time, and bore all our sins and removed them. Therefore, our Lord has saved you and me.

The apostle Paul speaks this word using the example of men. He said that scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. There are people who die for their country, and there are people who die for someone said to be good. In movies, aren't there scenes where someone, to protect the person he loves, blocks the way while another person is shooting and is shot and dies? There are also scenes where someone, blocking the way for the person he loves, is cut down by a blade and breathes his last, saying, "Live my share of life, too." Such people do exist on occasion, but the word "perhaps" means that there are such people only once in a while. But our Lord, when we were still sinners, when we had not even been born, predestined that mankind would be born, and did the work of bearing sin for all of mankind, whether those who had already lived and gone or everyone else. Our Lord confirmed His love for us by receiving baptism from John in our place and dying in our place.

With a religious life, one cannot stand in the face of death

But people, not knowing this truth, keep living a religious life, leading a misunderstood life of faith in which they think that

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if they try hard, something will come of it, that they will be born again. That is what is so pitiful. They are living a religious life just to obtain their own salvation, thinking, "Someday I, too, will be born again; seeing how well I have lived up to now, if I hold on just a little longer until I die, it seems I will reach the final point." But those who live a religious life do not obtain this salvation. Because they have not prepared for death, because they are not ready to stand before God, they are anxious when they die and cling to prayers of repentance. The salvation needed in the face of death is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has already accomplished. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and therefore shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for them in our place, and rose again from death, there is no need to pay the price of sin with one's own zeal.

Long ago, there was a prayer house on a high mountain, and that prayer house had a director. That director held forty-day fasting prayers two or three times a year. Out of the 365 days of a year, he lived 120 days without eating food, drinking only water. From a fleshly point of view, how spiritual such a person looks! Since he did not eat, there seemed to be little occasion for him to sin, and he was a very great man who had a name as he traveled around as a revival speaker. But death came to this man. This is the story told by those who attended to him under him. On the evening before he died, the director crawled around his room offering prayers of repentance, saying, "Lord, remit this sin, and remit that sin, too." He felt in his own body that death had come, and he did not know what to do. Even if no one tells a person, "You are going to die," he senses that something in his body has broken down and is fading away. So he spent the whole

night saying, "I have done wrong; please remit my sins," and breathed his last the next morning, they say.

Dear fellow believers, a person who does a lot of religious living, a person who tries to be saved through a religious life, a person who tries to become a righteous person without sin not by receiving the grace of God by faith but by his own zeal, prayers of repentance, fasting prayers, and devotion, becomes like that director when he dies. In the face of death, he cannot stand confidently before God. That director was a truly famous man, yet his death was like that. That is exactly what religion is. Anyone who has not been born again is like that. If one drinks only water for forty days without taking in any nourishment, only skin and bones remain. He did that two or three times a year, and whenever he felt his spiritual power had declined or that many bad thoughts were coming into his heart, he held fasting prayers again. So how could he live long? Yet those who were under him, out of respect for that director, said that their director had offered prayers of repentance very thoroughly when he died. But what do we make of it when we hear that? That is the picture of someone who met death without having been saved. The Bible says, *"Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15)*. Truly, when the saints face death, they have no worry at all; there is only the fact that they are going to the kingdom of heaven. When death is ahead, they are concerned about the things left behind, but when death is right in front of them, they are at peace. They have no anxiety. They entrust everything to God and have no anxiety. They truly rejoice and are glad in hope, even in tribulations.

For this reason, people believe wrongly because they do not know how our Lord has saved us—that is, the fact that even before we were born, in order to save us sinners, He came and was born on this earth, received baptism from John, died on the

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Cross, rose again, and, having been seated at the right hand of the throne of God, will come again to take the righteous—because they do not know this word and this truth.

What sinners misunderstand is also this. They hold on to the word the Lord spoke, *"I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Mark 2:17)*, and misunderstand it. They misunderstand, thinking, "Even though I am lacking and have sin, since the Lord did not come to call the righteous but sinners, when the Lord comes again I will go to the kingdom of heaven; I will not go to hell." But the Bible says of the Lord, *"To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:28)*. It is different. How could the Lord, who once came to this earth, come to call sinners when He comes again? He is not coming to call sinners; He is coming to appear a second time, apart from sin, to those who eagerly wait for Him. So they are misunderstanding that. That is why we must know the faith of those who misunderstand like this and tell them. We have preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit a great deal until now, but we must know what people are actually misunderstanding. We must see through that misunderstanding and tell them, "You believe in this way, but that is a misunderstanding."

The blood of the Cross originated from the baptism

Let us also see what people misunderstand in this passage. *"Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His*

life" (Romans 5:9–10). The apostle Paul said that, having been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. But people misunderstand this. They think that if they only believe in the blood of the Cross, they will not suffer wrath. They misunderstand, thinking, "If I only believe in the Lord, who was crucified and died for me, I will not go to hell; since the Lord received the judgment in my place, I will not go to hell but will go to the kingdom of heaven," but that is a wrong misunderstanding.

When the apostle Paul said that we shall be saved from the wrath of God by His blood, it means that the blood of the Cross and the fearful judgment of God are connected to each other. The reason Jesus Christ was crucified and shed His blood is that He had all the sin of mankind, which includes us, transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John. Because He bore the sin of the world, He was hung on the Cross and could receive the judgment in place of mankind before God the Father and shed His blood. Therefore, the apostle Paul said that by His blood, those who believe shall be saved from the wrath of God. The baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross are connected in this way, in the relationship of the passing on of sins and the atonement. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of those sins. We must also believe the fact that Jesus rose again from death and saved us.

So people misunderstand, thinking that they are saved if they only believe in the blood of the Cross, but they must believe that before the blood of the Cross, Jesus Christ, who had no sin, bore our sins through the baptism He received from John. It means that because Jesus bore our sins, had all the sins passed on to Him, and shed His blood on the Cross and saved you and me,

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those who believe in that Jesus Christ and believe in the judgment of Jesus Christ's death on the Cross are saved from the judgment of God's fearful wrath. It is through faith in Jesus Christ that we are saved from the fearful wrath of God. We have received this grace in which we stand by faith, the gift of entering the kingdom of heaven, the gift of becoming righteous. Yet people misunderstand, thinking that if they only believe in the blood of the Cross, their sins disappear and they escape wrath and go to the kingdom of heaven. That is not so.

One is a sinner not by committing sin but from birth

Also, it said that through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, yet people think that they become sinners if they sin and do not become sinners if they do not sin. But we must keenly feel and acknowledge the fact that even before we were born, even before a man and a woman married and had a child, sin was already in that person's seed. Because people misunderstand, thinking that they become sinners if they sin and do not become sinners if they do not sin, all the religions of this world undergo training and practice self-cultivation. They think that if they go into the mountains where no one is and live without having contact with people, they will not sin, and so will not become sinners and will reach a holy state. There are this many things that people misunderstand. Man is truly a mass of misunderstanding. About God, they misunderstand everything.

But a person is a sinner from before he is born, and even if he does not commit a single sin after being born, there is sin in his heart. Being a sinner is not a matter of logic or theory; it means that there actually is sin. Just as there is sin in the hearts

of those who have not been born again, even though a righteous person has no sin in his heart, when he has children he passes on the flesh and the seed of the flesh, and so the children born in that way have sin. That is why God said, *"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit" (Matthew 7:17)*. It means that if the seed is a sinner's seed, one is a sinner before being born again, before believing in Jesus Christ. One is the seed of sin.

There is something that those who believe in Jesus misunderstand in particular. They acknowledge that they were sinners from before they were born, but they misunderstand when they come to believe in Jesus partway through their lives. They think, "Because I have believed in Jesus, the original sin I inherited and the sins I have committed so far have all been remitted; I can say that I have no sin up to now, but because of the sins I will commit until I die, I cannot say that I am righteous." Since they know that original sin and the sins committed so far were all remitted when they believed in Jesus, it seems they believe correctly, but in fact that itself is a misunderstanding. Then, did the Lord not remove the sins they themselves will commit in the future? The Lord, when we were still without strength, even before we were born on this earth, was born on this earth and bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and died on the Cross and saved us from sin and death, but they misunderstand this. That is why the misunderstanding of those who believe in Jesus is very fearful. The misunderstandings of those who believe in Jesus are not easily cleared up. No matter how much you tell them, they say, "How can you say there is no sin when we keep on sinning?"

This is a misunderstanding that no one can escape before believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because it is such a great misunderstanding, it has become a doctrine that is

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acknowledged as if it were the truth. The doctrine of sanctification is exactly what receives such acknowledgment. Those who follow the doctrine of sanctification say that they are gradually becoming holy, and they strive diligently to achieve it themselves. But that makes no sense. Sanctification is an enormous misunderstanding. It is this sanctification that is the misunderstanding created beings have about God. Since people are in such sanctification, we must deliver them out of it. How do we deliver them? We must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them and make them realize that they are living their life of faith wrongly.

And there is one more thing that people misunderstand. *"For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come" (Romans 5:13–14)*. People misunderstand the word here that sin was in the world even before there was the law. When we apply this word to those who say they believe in Jesus but have not been born again, they say that although they already had sin from before they were born, they came to know that they had sin only after they knew Jesus and knew the law. Of course, it is true that they became sinners. But in fact, sin existed even before there was the law. God made Adam and Eve and said, *"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Genesis 2:17)*, but they picked and ate of it. Through one man's disobedience, he had already become a sinner, and his descendants had already become sinners, too. Yet those who believe in Jesus think that they had no sin before they believed in Jesus, and that they have sin after they believe in Jesus. But in fact, one is not a sinner because one has committed sin; even before committing sin, one is already the seed of sin, and

because one is the seed of sin, one sins until one dies. Therefore, one is a sinner and a mass of sin. So it is also a misunderstanding for those who believe in Jesus to say that, having come to know the law, one is a sinner if one sins and not a sinner if one does not sin. Also, people think the complete opposite of this true word of the Bible. Everything they know is the complete opposite. The salvation needed for us who were born with sin is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including the sin we inherited and the sins we will commit throughout our lives, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and after shedding His blood on the Cross and receiving the judgment for those sins in our place, He rose again from death.

The grace of salvation that is greater than one man's offense

People also misunderstand the free gift by which we are saved before God. *"But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification" (Romans 5:15–16).* Let us see what kind of misunderstanding Christians have. Of course, as for becoming sinners, through the offense of the one man Adam, many became sinners and died. But our being saved and becoming righteous is not like that. It said that the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses

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resulted in justification, and just as this word says, sinners all became sinners automatically. Because one man sinned and we were born as his descendants, we all became sinners, and death came to reign over those who had become sinners. That came about automatically, but our being saved before God is different from this and greater than this.

How is it greater? All people becoming sinners through one man's offense was not something we did but something that happened freely, and becoming righteous before God also happened freely. But the grace by which God has saved us is greater, it says. It said that although we commit countless offenses, from those offenses we have come to justification. Not only are we sinners, but as sinners we commit sins as we live until we die, yet our Lord has removed all those sins as well. So, greater than all people becoming sinners through one man's offense is the one Man, Jesus Christ, coming and bearing all our sins and saving us.

What people misunderstand is that they think they are sinners if they commit sin. But God has brought us to justification from many offenses. Although we sin until we die, our Lord bore all those sins, from the original sin we have from the time we are born from our mother's womb to the actual sins we commit until we die, and gave us the gift of salvation. Yet people misunderstand this. The very thought that if one is born a sinner, one lives on as a sinner and then at death barely manages to be changed, or not, is itself a misunderstanding. They misunderstand it as if one automatically lives as a sinner until death and becomes righteous upon entering the kingdom of God. But the salvation by which the Lord has saved us is not like that. The Lord drew to Himself even the sins not yet committed, had all the sin of mankind passed on to His own body, and came into the world and received all the judgment, and so saved us. That

is why the grace by which He has saved us is greater than our having become sinful through one man's offense.

But people misunderstand the grace of salvation God has given, this gospel of the water and the Spirit, that salvation by which God has saved us. They say that a person naturally cannot become righteous. They misunderstand, thinking that just as one became a sinner through one man's offense, one lives as a sinner until death, and only when the Lord comes and welcomes him at death because of that one merit of having believed in Jesus, and he is held in the Lord's bosom, does he at last become a person without a single sin, and that salvation is completed in this way. But that is not so. Even before living out our lives, we have already become righteous. Did Noah become righteous when he died? Was it so with Abraham? The Bible says, *"Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations" (Genesis 6:9)*. Noah lived several hundred more years after being born again before he departed. So, those who believe in Jesus have countless misunderstandings, and these countless misunderstandings are what Satan the devil has deceived them with, using people. The grace that is greater than our many offenses lies in the fact that Jesus resolved sin without leaving any behind. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our many offenses, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and therefore paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are righteous now.

Long ago in the Middle Ages, theology stood above philosophy, and it was said that philosophy was the handmaid of theology. So what the clergy said could not possibly be refuted, and even later, in the seventeenth century, when people like Galileo raised objections, they could even be burned at the stake if things went wrong. Satan the devil took hold of those who had

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not been born again and worked through them. He had them obtain the title of theologian and doctoral degrees, and they recognized one another among themselves and established doctrines among themselves. By establishing doctrines, they declared that what they said was the truth, interpreted the Bible absurdly, and commanded people accordingly. Just as Satan the devil deceived Adam and Eve, saying, *"In the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (Genesis 3:5)*, so he deceived people's souls. He set up the logic that God has saved you in this way: original sin He has remitted, and actual sins are remitted by offering prayers of repentance every day; this is how our Lord has saved you. So people misunderstand, and they believe while misunderstanding.

Dear fellow believers, when you preach the gospel, you must preach knowing what misunderstandings people have. It is not simply that they did not know this; it is that they hold enormous misunderstandings even before knowing it. Until those misunderstandings are stripped away, they do not readily accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even when the gospel of the water and the Spirit enters, only when those many misunderstandings are stripped away does the gospel of the water and the Spirit fully enter the heart and take root. So how much work we have to strip away misunderstandings! If it were rather someone who had never believed in Jesus at all, with no misunderstanding whatsoever, wouldn't it be simple to tell him that Jesus has saved you in this way? But when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who have believed in Jesus for a long time and lived a religious life for a long time, I cannot tell you how hard it is for the gospel of the water and the Spirit to enter until we have pushed our way through all the many misunderstandings they have and stripped them away. Even when the gospel of the water and the Spirit enters, it is

pressed down and buried under many misunderstandings, and it fails to grow and dies. Therefore, when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must preach it knowing that people have these many misunderstandings.

The law reveals sin, and the righteousness of God reigns

Another thing people misunderstand is that the law must be kept. Look at the word. *"The law entered that the offense might abound" (Romans 5:20)*. This word is right. When law intervenes, sin is revealed and sin increases. When there was no law, sin was not regarded as sin, but when the law comes, sin is revealed and sin is acknowledged. God gave the law to Moses in order to make the people realize and know their sins, which they had as those born as the descendants of Adam. But when the people said they would keep it, He said, "Then keep it; keep it in holiness; if you keep it, I will give you such and such blessings." So God, knowing that the people could not keep it, gave the tabernacle system and the law of sacrifice, and through the tabernacle and the law of sacrifice gave the law of salvation by which the people passed their sins on to the sacrificial offering and received the remission of sins.

Another thing we must know is the word that says, *"So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21)*. If there is sin, death surely reigns and rules. But the grace by which we are saved also reigns through righteousness. What righteousness? The righteousness of God. The love of God by which God sent His own Son to this earth, passed our sins on to His own Son, judged His own Son, and so

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saved us; the righteousness of salvation by which God has saved us; the gospel of the water and the Spirit—this is the righteousness of God. Grace reigns through the righteousness of God, and God brings us to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. So our being saved is being saved through the righteousness of God. So important is this righteousness of God that the apostle Paul keeps speaking of the righteousness of God, saying that through the righteousness of God we have access into the grace in which we stand by faith. This righteousness of God is precisely the gospel, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. How important this is! Yet, as the word *"being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3)* says, how many people there are all over the world among those who believe in Jesus who misunderstand the righteousness of God and believe wrongly! Look at the basis on which the righteousness of God delivers us from sin and death. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and because of those sins He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place, and then rose again from death and gave us eternal life.

Through the righteousness of God we reign, and since it was so that we might come to eternal life through Jesus Christ, we have obtained eternal life. We who have been born again have obtained eternal life. *"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)*. Dear fellow believers, we become righteous. Just as all people became sinners because of the one man Adam, since Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again, and

ascended into heaven, and so saved us, all those who believe in that Jesus Christ become righteous.

The simple gospel that strips away misunderstandings

But it is all a misunderstanding for people to say they are sinners even after believing in Jesus, and besides this there are countless misunderstandings. If we were to speak of what those who believe in Jesus misunderstand, there would be no end. With the people of the world misunderstanding this much, I know that the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is hard and difficult for you and for me. Even so, let us go forward comforting one another, meeting people and preaching to them the gospel of the water and the Spirit and clearing up their misunderstandings. How simple this gospel of the water and the Spirit is! Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River and died on the Cross, and so saved us. How simple and how clear it is! Even though God has saved us in this way, the devil has deceived people, saying that they must be sanctified and that they must do this or that, and has made them his slaves. Therefore, we must know the misunderstandings people have and preach this simple gospel of the water and the Spirit to strip away those misunderstandings. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we will preach as we clear up misunderstandings makes this salvation clear. Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for it in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and completed the remission of sins. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The grace of Christ that is greater than sin and death

< Romans 5:12–21 >

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s

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disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Look at the source of sin and death

A person who regards sin as only a few actions he has committed thinks that if he corrects those actions, the problem of sin will also be solved. But when he corrects one, another sin is revealed in his heart, and so he comes to realize that what must be corrected lies deeper than the actions visible to the eye. From verse 12, Paul reveals that source through a comparison in which he sets Adam and Jesus Christ side by side. Speaking of the sin and death that began from one man is not meant to leave us in despair, but to make us know how great the work the one Savior accomplished is—that is, the work in which Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid its price with the blood of the Cross, and then rose again from death.

Let us read verse 12. "*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12)*. After saying earlier that we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, Paul, with the word "therefore," draws on that salvation and reveals from what state we have been delivered. Sin did not begin as a problem that each person produced separately while living. Adam, the forefather of mankind, did not believe the word of God and sinned, and we, his descendants, were born as

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people who inherited sin. That is why we live committing sins, and because of those sins we have come to death.

Therefore, no one can point to a few good deeds of his own and say that he is a person without sin. Evil that has not yet been revealed is also in our hearts, and when circumstances change, it appears in thoughts, words, and actions. Seeing the faults of others does not make one's own sins disappear either, so we must acknowledge that all of us are people who need salvation before God.

Let us read verse 13. *"For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13)*. It is not that sin came into being in the world only after the law was received. Sin was already there, but because people did not know the law of God, they did not recognize their hearts and deeds as sin. The law did not produce sin; it revealed as sin the sin that already existed, and what Paul said in chapter 3, that by the law one comes to realize sin, has the same meaning. Even a person who considered himself fine by his own standard finds his sin revealed before the word of God, so the fact that he did not realize his sin cannot be evidence that he had no sin.

This is also the reason verse 14 says that death reigned from Adam to Moses. Death came even to those who did not commit the same offense as Adam, so the problem of sin is not a matter to be judged by comparing a few of an individual's actions. Yet Paul calls this Adam a type of Him who was to come. Following the very principle by which many came to be under sin because of one man, he has us compare the work of the one Jesus Christ saving many people. Jesus received baptism from John and bore the sins of those many people in His one body, and shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for them in our place.

The gift by which even many offenses were remitted

Just because Adam and Christ are compared by the same principle, we must not regard the offense and the free gift as being of the same size. Verse 15 overturns this comparison with the word "but," saying that although many died through one man's offense, the gift by the grace of Jesus Christ abounded to many. The free gift is the gift of salvation that God has given freely, that is, the remission of sins. Since He gave the remission of sins and life to us who had come to death because of sin, the grace Christ has given is far greater than the sin inherited from Adam.

Let us read verse 16. *"And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification" (Romans 5:16)*. Look here at the one man's offense and the many offenses together. Paul compares the amount of sin we commit with the amount of grace the Lord has given, as if weighing them on a scale, and we not only inherited sin from Adam but also commit countless sins throughout our lives. There is evil we have thought of in our hearts, and there are sins we have carried out in action, and the gift Jesus Christ has given is the salvation that has remitted even those many offenses and made us righteous. Since Jesus, when He received baptism from John, had even the sins we would commit in the future all passed on to Him, and shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for them in our place, it is not that He resolved only our fundamental sin and left to us the sins we commit as we live.

Here we can also see that judgment and salvation are different from each other. Judgment is handed down according

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to each sin when a person is born and commits sin, but the salvation of Jesus had already been completed even before we realized our own sins. Therefore, just because offenses keep being revealed while we live, it is not that salvation must also be accomplished a little more each time. Because it is the grace that resolved not only the condemnation that came from one offense but also the many offenses of a whole lifetime, we can tell the Lord even of a fault we have just now discovered, relying on the remission of sins He has accomplished.

Verse 17 says that those who receive this gift will reign in life through Jesus Christ. Before, because of sin, we could not escape death and the judgment that follows it, but now we have come to live forever by the life the Lord has given. The word that says those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness means that even when shortcomings are revealed as we live, we live in a state in which we have already received the remission of those sins in abundance. So what remains for us who believe is not to strive again to remove sin, but to live doing what is right before God, as befits the people of God.

The basis on which we became righteous is the obedience of Jesus

Verses 18 and 19 reveal how that great gift was given to us. Just as one offense brought many people to condemnation, one righteous act brought many people to justification and life. That righteous act which gave us life is the work in which Jesus Christ saved sinners according to the will of the Father. Paul does not set up our works as the basis of salvation, but has us look to what Jesus did.

Let us read verse 19. *"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)*. Adam defied the word of God and passed sin down to his descendants, but Jesus obeyed the will of the Father and gave us the remission of sins. If we think of that obedience merely as His showing us a good life, we cannot know how our sins were removed. Jesus Himself fulfilled the will of the Father, who wanted to give sinners life.

The will of the Father that Jesus obeyed was to remove all the sins of sinners in order to make them His own people. So Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John, and at that time all the sins of the world, including even the sins we would commit throughout our lives, were passed on to Jesus once and for all. Because He was the One who had the sins passed on to Him, He could receive the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and by rising again from death He remitted our sins and gave us new life. This salvation, accomplished in obedience to the will of the Father, is precisely the righteousness of God that the gospel of the water and the Spirit conveys. The basis on which we say we are righteous lies not in our own works having become perfect, but in the fact that Jesus has actually removed our sins.

Therefore, do not stop at knowing yourself as one who has inherited sin, but believe in your heart in Jesus Christ, who has made us righteous. Being born as a descendant of Adam was not something we chose, but hearing and accepting the work the Savior accomplished is a matter of faith. Since the basis on which He gave us the remission of sins lies not in our own goodness but in the obedience of Jesus, do not try to add your own righteousness to that salvation. The Lord has established those who believe in the salvation He accomplished as righteous people without sin.

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The end to which grace leads is eternal life

We must also know, together with this grace, the reason the law came in. When verse 20 says that it was so that the offense might abound, it means that God makes us know even more clearly that we are sinners. When God says not to covet, even the covetousness of the heart is revealed, and when He says to honor our parents, we come to know how lacking we are in a heart that honors them. Even a person who seemed to have no great fault outwardly comes to realize how many sins he has once he knows the law of God.

But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. The law's revealing sin does not mean it found sins left outside the salvation of Jesus. Because there is the salvation that has already remitted even those sins, the law is not a law that leaves us abandoned in condemnation, but becomes the guide that brings those who know their sins to Jesus Christ so that they may receive the remission of sins. That is why a person who used to strive to hide himself before the law can now cast off his own righteousness and rely on the righteousness the Lord accomplished, and can give thanks to Christ even while acknowledging his own shortcomings.

Let us read verse 21. *"So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21)*. The end to which sin led us was death, but the end to which the grace of God leads is eternal life. The righteousness here is not righteousness that man has built up, but the most right thing God did to save sinners, that is, the righteousness of God by which He sent Jesus to this earth and had Him receive baptism from John, thereby passing all the sins of sinners on to Jesus, and had Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and receive the judgment for

them in our place. In a person who does not believe in the righteousness of God, sin still reigns, but in us who believe in that righteousness, the righteousness of God that removed our sins reigns. That is why we can escape from a life of looking only at our own faults and worrying about judgment, and can live doing what pleases God, relying on the life we have received from the Lord.

The source of the sin that was revealed again in the heart even after a few actions were corrected, Paul found in the one man Adam, and its solution he found in the one Jesus Christ. Christ had the sin we inherited and the many sins we have committed all passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death. That grace is greater than sin and death. Therefore, do not think of your end as the death that came from Adam, but believe in the grace of Jesus Christ, who has made us righteous, and live looking to the eternal life to which that grace leads. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The gift of righteousness that abounds to those who are sinners through and through

< Romans 5:12–21 >

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through

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one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Sin and death that entered through one man

Whether they want to or not, people are born and commit many sins. Just as an apple tree blossoms and bears fruit as the years go by, people, too, are born and commit many sins, and so they tend not to think seriously about sin. But we must live knowing the word *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. If a sinner knows and considers what the consequence of the sin he has is, that person will surely strive to escape from sin. What a sinner needs is to know well the consequence of his sin, to seek the Savior, and to believe in the truth of salvation. And he needs to learn clearly the truth by which the sins and transgressions he has can be remitted. The way to escape from sin and death is made clear by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus, by the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world, including even our transgressions, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and gave us eternal life.

Why must people inevitably sin? About this, the Bible says, *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12)*. Who is the one man spoken of here?

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He is Adam, the ancestor of mankind. Through sin came death. Because man has a spirit, the death spoken of here refers to being cut off from God. Death means the death of a person's body, but it also speaks at the same time of being cut off from God. The word that thus death spread to all men because all sinned is a word that implies that all the sinners of this world will receive judgment in the future.

The Bible says that through one man sin entered the world and all people became sinners. This word that God is now speaking is the truth. Were we born as descendants of Adam, or did we evolve? We were born as descendants of Adam. Does a person born as a descendant of Adam have sin, or not? He does. People are born with sin. Adam is the ancestor of our human race.

When Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden, they fell into sin because of Satan the devil. God commanded them that they could eat of the fruit of every tree of the garden but *"of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (Genesis 2:17)*. Rather, He gave them the hint that they should eat of the fruit of the tree of life and obtain eternal life. But man did not believe that word of grace and fell for the enticement of Satan the devil. Adam and Eve came to fall into sin because they did not believe the word of God. After that, they were driven out of the Garden of Eden and bore children. That is exactly what became the cause of you and me being born on this earth. Through our ancestors Adam and Eve, we were born into this world having inherited not only the image of God but also sin.

Man born as the seed of sin

Man is a seed that has sin. All mankind inherited the sin of Adam and Eve. Therefore the Bible records that through one man sin entered the world, and through one man all people became sinners. That is why all people are sinners before God. Yet people live in this world not knowing that they are sinners. Even though they were clearly born sinners, they live on without knowing what they themselves are. Even though people were born with the seed of sin, they think they are beings who will not receive the judgment of God. We who have inherited sin need a salvation that we cannot make for ourselves. Jesus, by the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world, including the sin we inherited and the sins we would commit throughout our lifetime, passed on to Him once and for all, and then, to pay the price of those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again from death, and He gave us that salvation.

Then, if all mankind was born having inherited sin through one man and all live as sinners, one may think: how can there be various races with different skin colors? But the Bible clearly says that in the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, He made Adam. The word Adam means ‘man.’ One may have the question that if people are the descendants of one man their skin colors should be similar, so how can they be different, and the answer is as follows. Scientists say that there is the pigment melanin in the human body, and when the body receives a lot of sunlight this pigment comes out in large amounts and blocks ultraviolet rays. So the people who live in places that receive a lot of sunlight came to have dark skin, and the people who live in places that receive little came to have light skin. The Bible says that mankind spread from one man, and

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when scientists did their research, they came to learn that the difference in skin color is because of the pigment melanin. Therefore the ancestor of you and me is still Adam.

We inherited not only Adam's flesh but also the sin Adam had. Dear fellow believers, do you know the fundamental sin of man? Man is a sinner born with fundamental sin from the time he is born into this world. Let us look at the word. *"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (Matthew 7:17–18)*. Because we were born under the one man Adam, we were all born having inherited sin. Then, if we are compared to trees, we are bad trees. Just as a bad tree cannot bear good fruit, if a person is born a sinner, no matter how much he wants to live well and wants to live kindly and wants not to sin, he ends up sinning. No matter how hard a person tries to live a good life, he cannot live a good life. This is like an alcoholic. An alcoholic keeps drinking.

Know that you are a sinner who cannot live without sinning

Once I saw on television a program showing a facility where alcoholics are isolated and treated. One man had been confined in there for thirteen years, receiving injections. When a reporter asked him the reason, he said that he had clearly recovered and did not even drink, but his family did not come to get him. Even though the doctor told him he was fully recovered and should leave, his family did not come to get him. It turned out that his family had come to the doctor and said he must not be let out, even spending money so that he could not come out. How hard it must have been for the family that they had him isolated! In

fact, one can understand the family, too. The characteristic of the people who come there was, without exception, that they do not want to drink but cannot help drinking, and that they know they must not drink but cannot live without drinking. After drinking a lot and often, they talk nonsense and cannot control themselves.

Why do they keep drinking? Because they are addicted to alcohol. And because mentally their hearts are empty and have no satisfaction. Because there is sin in the heart, human life is always distressing; one wants to live kindly but cannot live kindly, things do not go as one has resolved in one's heart, and one cannot live a good life. So, being distressed, one despairs of oneself and drinks, they say. Even while thinking, "I don't know why I am like this at all; I should not live like this," one keeps doing it, and so feels greatly betrayed by oneself. One clearly tries not to live like this, tries not to drink, and yet keeps drinking. So, losing to alcohol, one feels disillusioned with oneself, and so drinks even more, and in the end goes to an isolation facility as an alcoholic.

People do sinful deeds and say sinful words because of the sin they have. Just as an apple seed has the genes of an apple inside it, so that when it is planted in the ground a sprout comes up, branches rise, flowers bloom, and it bears apples, so also when a person is born a sinner, he lives his whole life as a person who cannot help but keep sinning even though he does not want to sin. People do have the thought of wanting to do good. But sinners who have not received the remission of sins cannot do good. They have no ability to do good. For us, who cannot escape from sin by our own strength like this, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all by the baptism He received from John. Jesus bore those sins and, by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, received the

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judgment for sins in our place, and He rose again from death and gave us the remission of sins and new life.

Even while committing sins as routinely as eating meals, people think the sins they committed in secret are fine, and no matter how great a sin they commit, if they were not caught, it is not even a problem to themselves. Why? Because they were originally born as a lump of sin and love sin, so committing sin is so natural, instinctive, and utterly a matter of course to them. Just as it is a matter of course for peppers to hang on a pepper plant and for jujubes to hang on a jujube tree, since people are born with the gene of sin in their hearts, it is so very natural for them to commit sin as they live. A person born as such a sinner cannot help sinning even though he does not want to sin. Having been born as a sinner with the gene of sin, how can he live without sinning?

The Bible says, *"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" (Mark 7:21–22)*. People are born with these twelve kinds of unclean hearts. People have set up the order and laws that must be kept among people, and that is morality. They have set the standard that doing no harm to others and doing good to them is living rightly, and that such things are right. That is all necessary when many people live together in society.

Among people, there is not a single person who does not steal. Everyone steals. But some people say, "I have never stolen." Of course they may think that they have not stolen, but that person, too, has stolen before God. An elderly sister later testified that while walking along a road she saw a pumpkin, and the moment she saw it she thought that it would be really delicious to make soup with that pumpkin, so without realizing it she looked

around to see whether there were people or not, and when there was no one, she ended up hiding it in her petticoat, bringing it home, and making soup and eating it. Dear fellow believers, you may not even realize that you have stolen. You merely followed your own craving. Given only the chance, people readily commit murder and readily steal.

People also readily commit adultery between men and women. People were born from birth with the gene of the sin of adultery. Because people were born with such a heart of sin, they are all too familiar with sin. Why do people like bars and dark places? Such places are extremely popular. Why do they like them? Because they need a place to exercise the gene of sin they have. The place where people exercise their sin is precisely such a pitch-dark place. Because people were born into this world with the gene of sin, when they meet an environment for sinning, they exercise their inborn disposition. But because society has its own laws, they try not to sin. Yet people were born as sinners from birth. Even though born sinners, they try to hide their sin, saying, "Not me; even when I see women wearing short skirts, it doesn't affect me at all." Does it really not affect you at all? It is because you are looking at them together with many others that it doesn't affect you; see whether it really doesn't affect you when you are alone.

It says, *"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (Matthew 7:18)*. People must know that they themselves are sinners. We were born as fundamental sinners. From birth we were not good trees but bad trees. Because of sin, people receive the judgment for sin according to the law of God. That is why a sinner must know himself well and must receive the remission of sins. If one has come to know one's sins, one must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled. Because Jesus bore all the sins of the

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world, including the sins of our hearts and deeds, once and for all by the baptism He received from John, He received that judgment in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death.

A sinner through and through, or a sinner just a little?

The Bible speaks of many things as parables of sin, and among them let us look at leprosy. *"And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of the one who has the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, then the priest shall consider; and indeed if the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce him clean who has the sore. It has all turned white. He is clean" (Leviticus 13:12–13)*. This was the method of diagnosing leprosy that God taught the priests.

People are born with the gene of sin in their hearts and commit sin all their lives, but some people reveal their sinning only very little. Those who are so good-natured and strong in patience that they sin only a little do not know that they are sinners. If leprosy had spread only a little on someone, the priest had to diagnose him as unclean and send him outside. If a person has sin before God, he is isolated from God. God is holy. If one wants to draw near to God and go and live in the kingdom of God, one must not have even the slightest sin. One must receive the remission of sins.

Dear fellow believers, you must know whether you are a sinner through and through or a sinner just a little. If leprosy had spread completely from the top of the head to the tip of the toes, the priest diagnosed him as clean, pure, all right. God established

the law this way. Likewise, a person who knows himself to be a hundred-percent sinner when he looks at himself believes it and receives the remission of sins when told that Jesus Christ came and removed his sins in this way. But a sinner just a little does not accept it when told that Jesus came, received baptism from John in order to bear his sins, died on the Cross, rose again, and saved him from sin.

If Jesus took away all the sin of the world, is there sin? There is not. The remission of sins is accomplished once and for all. So a sinner must know about himself. Only when one knows oneself does one come to receive the remission of sins. People bring only a little sin before God and pray for their sins to be remitted, saying, "God, I have done wrong. I didn't mean to do it, but that person did that, so I did it. God, I will never ever do it again." God calls such a person unclean.

Before God, there is not a single good spot in man. "Whether You kill me or let me live, do as You will. It is up to You. I am a sinner. I am a hundred-percent sinner. I am one who is to go to hell. Do as You will. Only, I ask that You have mercy on me and save me from all these sins. If You are God, save me. Then I will believe in You. And I will live according to Your will." God saves the person who confesses like this.

Before God, man is a sinner in his heart, a sinner in his thoughts, a sinner in his deeds—a sinner through and through. If a sinner has done a good deed, it is putting on hypocrisy and pretending to do good. That is rushing in to deceive God. A person born a sinner must know himself. By knowing what kind of person he is, he can receive the solution. But if he does not know this, he commits sin and is disappointed in and distressed about himself. He lives deceived by himself. The salvation that gave life to us who are sinners through and through was perfectly accomplished by Jesus. Since Jesus, who had all the sins of the

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world transferred to Him once and for all by the baptism He received from John, received the judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross because of those sins and rose again from death, we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins.

People always come to have evil thoughts. Even after resolving, “Ah, why are my thoughts so evil? This won’t do,” a little later lustful thoughts boil up again like boiling porridge. “Why do I have such filthy thoughts? At school they tell us to live kindly, so why am I like this?” But he does not know about himself. Because he does not know the fact that he has inherited the gene of sin, he is always distressed and troubled, thinking, “Why am I like this?” Murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness—because these things come out from within him, he hates himself and is distressed. But, dear fellow believers, it is a blessing to know that we were originally born as fundamental sinners and are lumps of sin who always bear the twelve kinds of unclean fruit in their season throughout our lifetime, sinners through and through.

A sinner needs to know himself. Because everyone who knows himself can receive grace before God. Because people do not know themselves, they cannot receive the grace of salvation. So a sinner must know the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood. He needs to know this truth. You and I did many bad deeds before we received the remission of sins. Do you know why that was? I hope you will know that it was not because you wanted to that you did them, but that you came to do such deeds because you had originally inherited the gene of sin. You originally did not want to do so, but it was because you had inherited the gene of sin.

Because people have sin, death inevitably came to them. To be delivered from sin and death, one must seek Jesus and meet Him. And one must receive the remission of sins. Then one comes to enjoy eternal life. Don't you, too, want to receive the remission of sins?

The sin of this world came into being through the deception of Satan. And through Adam sin entered into the world. From the sin that we committed because we are weak created beings, Jesus—who is mighty, who is the Savior, the Creator, and the King of kings—came to this earth clothed in the form of a man and saved us at one time. He removed all the sins of man once and for all. Just as we became sinners once and for all, Jesus received baptism from John and had sin passed on to Him once and for all, and by His death on the Cross He remitted the sins of mankind.

No matter how much sin a person has, no matter what sin he has committed, if he believes that Jesus came and removed his sins, he obtains new life and is saved. The purpose for which God made us human beings was to make us His children. God planned and determined this, and He came to this earth to carry out His own plan, and He carried out that work perfectly. If so, our sins cannot possibly exist. He has never once made a mistake. Adam was a type of Him who was to come, and the One who was to come is none other than Jesus. Our salvation depends on Jesus. Just as we became sinners through Adam regardless of our will, being saved, too, depends entirely on Jesus.

The only thing we must do is to hold on to and believe with our hearts the salvation from sin that Jesus accomplished. There is nothing else for us to do. And it is to rejoice that He has removed our sins. If so, can a person be saved by disciplining his flesh and being zealous? And would it be right to teach that

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way? Does a person's remission of sins depend on works? No. It depends on faith.

The gift of salvation greater than Adam's offense

Let us look at the word. *"But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification" (Romans 5:15–16)*. The word 'free gift' means a gift. It says that this free gift is not like the offense. This means that because of the sin inherited through Adam all people, every one of them, were to go to hell, but because Jesus Christ removed sin, all people receive the remission of sins by believing in the one Man, Jesus. The Lord removed in advance even the future sins that people have not yet committed.

Because of Adam, a person born as a descendant of Adam is a sinner even if he does not sin. And he goes to hell even if he does not sin. But Jesus came to this earth and became our Savior. This means that even though people keep committing many sins, even though they do so many wicked things, Jesus has removed those sins abundantly. That is why His free gift is greater than what came through the one man's offense. We were sinners by that heart alone that opposes God and had to go to hell because we inherited sin, but the word says that the grace by which our Lord removed all of it—both the sin of a person's opposing God throughout his lifetime and even the offenses of sinning by bringing out the evil thoughts in the heart—is greater. The gift

that removed even future sins is great because Jesus paid the price abundantly. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all by the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and then rose again from death, even the sins we have not yet committed were settled within that salvation.

This word says that Jesus' love and the gift of the remission of sins are greater than the offense that came through Adam. Do you understand what this means? Our Lord abundantly removed even the sins that people commit in the world. This means that the gift of salvation the Lord has given is greater than the sin inherited from Adam. It is more abundant and more overflowing. Now the Lord only wishes that we believe that He removed all the sins of mankind with His baptism and blood.

Just as the word says, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*, the Lord, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, saved sinners from all sins. God says that those who believe in the Lord, who has remitted the sin of the world, have no sin. Many people believe that they receive remission every day by praying every day for the sins they commit in the world, but that is not the truth. Because the Lord received baptism from John and shed His blood and removed even the sins mankind would commit in the future, those who believe have no sin and have been saved from all sins. *"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17)*. Those who have been saved by believing in this grace are none other than you and I. Who are those who have received abundance of the grace of God and of the gift of righteousness? They are those who believe in the baptism our Lord received from John and His blood. People

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receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus' baptism and blood.

Because we have received the remission of sins abundantly, we give praise. Since it says that we *"will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17)*, we are kings. We are reigning. This is something only a king can do. Those who have received abundance of the gift of righteousness reign on this earth. We are reigning right now. We live reigning every day. Today we reign, and tomorrow, too, we reign. If one treats a king well, one receives grace and becomes a king just the same. But if one does not believe in the salvation of the truth that the righteous preach, one goes to hell.

We who became righteous through the obedience of one Man

"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:18–19). It said that through one offense many came to condemnation, and condemnation refers to judgment. All who were born as descendants of Adam and have not believed in Jesus and been born again come to judgment. But through one righteous act, that is, through the one righteous and right act of Jesus, many were justified and came to life. The one act of Jesus is that Jesus was born on this earth, had all the sins of all mankind transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John in the Jordan River, and on the Cross gave up the life of His own body and shed His blood on behalf of

mankind. Through that, the Lord made all people righteous. By one Man's obeying the will of God the Father, He made many people righteous.

Before God, seen by faith, are all the people of this world sinners or righteous? Seen by what God has done, they are all righteous. When I say such things by faith, some people point their fingers at me and lash out. But in fact, from God's point of view, there is no one who has sin. Because God sent His only Son to this earth, passed the sin of the world on to His only Son, and judged His only Son as the representative of the people of the world. Even though Jesus, by obeying the will of God the Father, completely accomplished the work of bearing all the sins of the world and removing them all, some people believe and some people do not believe. Those who believe are acknowledged as right before God through believing in that righteousness of God, and they enter the kingdom of heaven that has been prepared. The faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled by obeying establishes us as righteous. Because Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all by the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and gave life.

Those who have become exceedingly sinful become exceedingly righteous

"Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20–21). What did the law enter to make abound in

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man? It was that the offense might abound. Because people were born as descendants of Adam, they had sin originally. God gave us the law to make us know that everything we do, whether by deed or in heart, is sin. The Lord gave the law so that when a person sins, he might know that he has committed sin and also know how exceedingly sinful a sinner he is.

But it says that where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. Among those born with sin, those who say they do not commit many offenses do not really believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus saved them from sin. But those whose deeds are lacking and who cannot do well even when they try to live according to God's will believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, because the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that our Lord bore all the sin of the world once and for all, is such a great gift and they are so thankful to the Lord, who saved such people as themselves. Where sin abounded, grace and the gift abound. So those who have become exceedingly sinful become exceedingly righteous. Those who have become only slightly sinful try to become only slightly righteous and go to hell. A person who has become exceedingly sinful becomes exceedingly righteous. So a person who knows that he is an exceedingly evil person sincerely praises the salvation of Jesus.

Dear fellow believers, we have become righteous by faith. How evil are our deeds! How many sins do we commit before God! Among us humans, we understand one another, but if God, who has no sin, were to look at our deeds, how many things would be lacking in us! Praise the Lord. Just as the word *"as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21)* says, our Lord Jesus Christ has brought us to eternal life. The Lord's righteousness has made us reign in life.

Praise the Lord, who has abundantly delivered sinners from all sins. The more our evil is revealed, the greater is the grace of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all by the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross. The grace by which Jesus rose again from death and gave us life is greater than our shortcomings. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Sin entered through one man

< Romans 5:12–21 >

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin

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reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Three doctrines that have wrongly taken root in Christianity

The main title of Romans chapter 5, verses 12 through 21, is this: "Through one man we became sinners, and through the one Man, Jesus Christ, we are saved from all sins." The passage before it, chapter 5, verses 1 through 11, says, "*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1)*. Here, having been justified by faith does not mean a justification that merely calls us righteous; it means that through faith we have actually obtained what God has actually accomplished.

Now, before we enter into the word of verses 12 through 21, we must first think about several doctrines that are now causing harm within the religion called Christianity. The first is justification by faith. It is the doctrine of justification which says that one is called righteous simply because one believes, that one is called righteous even though one has sin. Another is the doctrine of sanctification. The doctrine of sanctification says that, believing in Jesus and offering prayers of repentance, we strive to live good lives until the day the Lord comes, until the day we go before God, and that by doing so our hearts gradually become holy and our bodies also become holy, so that when we go before God, we go having been changed into completely holy bodies and hearts.

It is correct that we obtain the righteousness of God through faith. We have no fundamental righteousness of our own, but it is correct to say that through faith in the righteousness of God

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we receive the remission of all sins and obtain that righteousness which God has given us. However, the justification by faith which says that one is called righteous even though one has sin, just because one believes in Jesus, is wrong. Even if we have believed in Jesus, if we have believed wrongly, there is sin in our hearts, and if we have believed in Jesus correctly, there is no sin in our hearts. If we have known and believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have been born again of water and the Spirit, we have no sin, and if we have believed only in the blood of the Cross and not in the water and the Spirit, there is sin in our hearts even though we have believed in Jesus. That is why the doctrine of justification by faith is very wrong. There are now several things in the denominations and churches of Christianity throughout the whole world that are theologically contradictory, and those are precisely the doctrine of justification by faith and the doctrine of sanctification. The reason we have no sin when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is that Jesus actually paid the price of sin. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received that judgment in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross, and He rose again from death and gave us righteousness.

It is correct that a person believes in Jesus and receives the remission of all sins, but people say that the sins committed up until one believed in Jesus are remitted, and the sins committed from then on are washed away and remitted every day through daily prayers of repentance, and that in this way one finally becomes righteous. This word tells us how contradictory and wrong that is. This word tells us very clearly that it is not so. Dear fellow believers, can we offer many prayers of repentance and thereby have our sins disappear and become righteous?

The doctrine of sanctification says that, when one believes in Jesus, in terms of the truth all the sins of one's whole life have been remitted, and yet that the sins one commits every day while living as a believer still remain in one's heart. That is why they believe that by offering many prayers of repentance and living a godly life well, one is gradually changed to be holy, so that later, when one goes before God, one goes having been changed to be perfectly and flawlessly holy in both body and heart. Looked at through the glasses of a person with weak flesh who sins every day, it seems right, but looked at through the glasses of God's truth—that is, when we look at that doctrine with the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the righteousness of God given to us through Jesus Christ—it is a contradictory statement that goes against the truth.

In worldly religions, those who practice yoga say that by cultivating the way they draw out the mysterious power within their own bodies, and that when they meet and become one with some divine thing in the air of the universe, they attain complete liberation (moksha) and their bodies and minds are changed to be completely holy. The reason the mind becomes calm when one does abdominal breathing and exhales very slowly is that the mind cannot help but settle down when one does not move the body busily and does not breathe often; it is not that a person's body and mind thereby reach perfect and flawless holiness. That is a statement that came from human thinking. It is written, *"To be carnally minded is death" (Romans 8:6)*. This human thinking always goes against the truth, causes people to believe wrongly, and causes them to be cursed. Therefore, only by getting out of this wrong doctrine within Christianity can one be saved. And yet, within Christianity, people believe that they receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance.

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They say that the sins one commits every day after believing in Jesus are remitted through daily prayers of repentance, but when you offer prayers of repentance, do the sins you have committed disappear? At first they seem to disappear emotionally, but if one truly knows the law, knows that one has sinned, and acknowledges that sin, that sin is recorded on the tablet of one's conscience. No matter how much one offers prayers of repentance, saying, "I have done wrong, I have done wrong," the sin recorded on the conscience never disappears. To soothe their consciences, people weep and plead, saying, "Since I have committed this sin, I will not eat nine meals; I will fast for three days." And then they comfort themselves, thinking, "Since I have wept and begged like this and gone without nine meals, drinking only water, I have paid the compensation for this much sin; my conscience has been eased, and God must have let me off too." Do sins disappear through prayers of repentance? They do not disappear. Among the Christians on this earth there is not a single person who has reached perfect and flawless sanctification through prayers of repentance. If Christianity is made into a religion, such thinking becomes possible. In Christianity, people say that if one devotes oneself with human thinking, something becomes holy and somehow changes, but that is the thinking of the human flesh, not the truth. The salvation that removes the sins recorded on our consciences does not come from our devotion. Jesus had all the sins of the world, including of course the sins recorded on our consciences, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and after paying the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, He rose again from death and accomplished salvation.

Human thinking always produces death. People try hard not to sin with their human thinking, and not only try, but actually

do not sin, and they think that if they do so their hearts will become holy, but no matter what they do, their hearts do not become holy. One can set one's heart on being holy, but one's heart does not come to be without sin. There is sin in everyone's heart, and in the heart of a person who has committed many sins, all the sins he has committed are recorded on the tablet of his conscience. So whenever he tries to pray, the recorded sins rise up in his thoughts without fail and appear, saying, "When did you commit what sin?" Because of those sins, he cannot go boldly before God, and saying that he is offering prayers of repentance for those sins, he offers prayers of repentance for thirty minutes, for an hour—some for a week, some for a month, some for their whole lives—and his life ends that way. So it is not that sins disappear through prayers of repentance; nor is it that body and heart are changed to be holy by striving to live good and holy lives every day and offering many prayers of repentance; nor is it the justification by faith which says that one is called righteous because one believes in Jesus. Whether you and I believe in Jesus or not, if there is sin in our hearts, God cannot call us sinless. A person who has sin even though he believes in Jesus is a sinner, and a person who does not believe in Jesus naturally has sin and so is a sinner; it is not through such things that one becomes righteous. The Bible says that we must be born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that when we are born again, our sins disappear.

Therefore, if we take as our premise that all three of these are wrong and enter into the word, reading from verse 12 one verse at a time and thinking it over together, we can see that this is what this word means. If you know your enemy and know yourself, you will win every battle. Only when we first know what doctrine Christianity is now believing wrongly, and whether it is really a correct doctrine or a doctrine that

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philosophers made up, and then approach the Bible, do we come to know clearly what this Bible is saying, and so come to abide in a complete faith.

Through one man, Adam, all became sinners

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12). This tells us through whom the sin that has come upon the hearts of all the people of this world entered. Through whom, through how many people, did the sin of this world come? It says that through one man sin entered the world. The title of this word, Romans chapter 5, verses 12 through 21, is this: "Through one man sin entered this world, and through the one Man, Jesus Christ, the sin of this world was removed." So it is one to one. Because of one man, Adam, all became sinners, and all come to be without sin because Jesus Christ came to this earth and carried out the righteousness of God. Therefore, you and I can become people without sin by believing, and those who believe come to be without sin. The content of how sin was removed through the one Man, Jesus, is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including our sins, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received that judgment in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross, and He rose again from death and made us live.

Here it says that through one man, Adam, sin came upon people. Therefore all became sinners. It is so because we are the descendants of Adam. Let us think about Adam. God made man from the dust and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, making him a living being. He made him a being that would

never die. But Adam did not believe the word that God had spoken, and by not believing, he sinned against God. Because this one man, Adam, sinned and then had children—because he was the ancestor and progenitor of mankind, because God made Adam, and Adam married Eve and had children, and they went on having children and more children, until mankind has spread like this today—it means that after Adam sinned and had children, he went on begetting sinners. It means he begot people who had sin. As a result, sin came upon the hearts of people, and sin came upon all mankind in this world, so that sin entered this world. Sin was not something God had made from the beginning; it arose from not believing the word of God, and through that man who did not believe, sin came upon all people, and we came to reach death.

Therefore we must know this. We must know that through one man, you and I, because we are human beings, all became sinners, and that we became sinners because we inherited sin along with the flesh. We did not become sinners because we committed sins. Committing sins is an offense, and an offense is something we commit because we have sin and because we are weak, but fundamentally, we became sinners before God because we inherited the seed of sin. That is called a seed. It is the seed of sin, a seed of evildoers.

"There is none righteous, no, not one"

Romans chapter 3 says that, apart from Jesus Christ, there is no one who has become righteous by himself. *"As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is*

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none who does good, no, not one'" (Romans 3:10–12). There is no one who has become righteous by himself without believing in Jesus Christ. There is no one who realizes by himself who God is. Among those born as the descendants of sinners, there is no one who seeks God either. They seem to seek God, but actually they are seeking someone powerful who will fulfill their own desires, not seeking God. They have all turned aside and together become unprofitable. They have become useless human beings. While saying they seek God, they want to have auspicious dreams, believing that if they have a good dream they will receive a blessing. They are not truly seeking God; they make up, in their own thinking, a god who will make something go well for them, and make requests to it. So, strictly speaking, they are blind. It says there is none who does good. Not a single one. Who does good? No one does good. It is hypocrisy.

Let us look at what follows. *"Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit; The poison of asps is under their lips" (Romans 3:13)*. Until the day we die, until the day we go to hell, we do our work in order to satisfy this throat. It says that with their tongues they have practiced deceit. In deceiving, people are first-rate their whole lives. Everyone who believes words like "I'm telling you the truth—if you buy this stock now, you'll strike it rich. I'm telling only you. This is real, honestly" is deceived, one hundred percent. That with their tongues they have practiced deceit speaks of the nature of human beings. It says that the poison of asps is under their lips. If someone treats them well, it is fine, but what happens if someone fails to treat them well even a little? Just as poison pours out of the venom sac when a viper bites, poison pours out of their mouths. They kill people completely with their mouths. If they say, "They say so-and-so is like this; they say he is worthless; they say he is a complete swindler; they say he is a

thief; they say he is a wicked fellow," a person dies by that one word. Even without killing directly, they kill cleanly with words. So people kill their colleagues with their mouths, kill their friends, kill the members of their own households, and kill all the people of the whole earth. Because the wickedness of human beings is revealed in this way, we must rely on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. After Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even the bitterness of our mouths and hearts, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and He rose again from death.

This is man. This is what a human being truly looks like before meeting Jesus Christ. *"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood" (Romans 3:14–15)*. Human beings are experts at sinning. They are experts born to commit sin. It means that human beings came into this world not to cry, nor to laugh, but to commit sin. Dear fellow believers, do you agree with this statement? It says that their feet are swift to shed blood. Wherever there is a place to sin, they run to it. When there is a place to sin, they do not walk slowly but run as fast as if they had motors attached to their legs, while in doing what is right they are sluggish. *"Destruction and misery are in their ways" (Romans 3:16)*. There is only destruction and misery their whole lives. The fundamental state of a human being before meeting Jesus Christ is that he was born to suffer destruction and to suffer misery on this earth. Toiling one's whole life to satisfy one's mouth is human life.

"And the way of peace they have not known" (Romans 3:17). They do not know peace. If we believe in the righteousness of God, we receive the remission of sins and become righteous, obtain the everlasting life of heaven, become children of God,

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and receive and enjoy all the blessings God gives. If we believe in the righteousness of God that is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sins in our hearts and become people without a single sin, become righteous, become children of God, and receive all the blessings of heaven, and even while living on this earth we are blessed in both spirit and body—yet it means that people do not know this way of peace and labor in vain. Striving in the flesh to live well, they cling to people like leeches their whole lives, saying, "Give me, give me," but they do not become rich. A human being dies withered up like a stalk that came out of dry ground. A person who has not received the remission of sins is such a person. *"There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Romans 3:18)*. They do not fear God.

Through one man, Adam, sin entered into man. We did not become sinners because we sinned; we became sinners because of our ancestor Adam. The word Adam means man. Because of that one man, Adam, the progenitor of mankind, all the people living on this earth, all the people who will be born hereafter, all mankind became sinners. That sin entered the world means that sin came upon our hearts from the time we were born. So it makes no sense to say that one removes sin by offering prayers of repentance. It is not only the sins we have actually committed that we have; because we were born into this earth carrying in our hearts, in a whole bundle, the twelve fundamental evil thoughts—the sinful heart of murder, adultery, envy, strife, theft, pride, and foolishness—our sins do not disappear by our asking for remission for the sins we have committed. We receive the remission of sins by believing that Jesus Christ came to this earth and removed our sins through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross—by believing that He removed both of them: that sin which we inherited fundamentally from our parents from our mother's womb, and the sins that I commit

my whole life, all bundled together. So we must acknowledge that through one man sin entered this world, and therefore we must believe that all people are put to death by that law of God, the law that the wages of sin is death, and that after they die they go to hell.

"Until the law sin was in the world"

"For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13). Was there sin before we knew the law of God? There were offenses, but people did not know that they were sin. Sin refers to what is fundamental, and an offense refers to doing wrong in action. Before we knew the law of God, we did not know what constituted sin before God. It means that before people knew the commands of God—the Ten Commandments, beginning with *"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3)* and going on to say that we must not make nor bow down to any image of what is in heaven, on the earth, or in the water under the earth, that we must not take the name of God in vain, and that we must keep the Sabbath holy, together with the 613 commandments that tell us to do this and not to do that—they did not know what sin they had been born with or what sin they had committed. That is why it says that until the law sin was in the world, but sin was not imputed when there was no law. We Gentiles had no law and fundamentally did not know the law, so even though God exists, we carved stones, regarded them as gods, and bowed down to them asking for blessings, not knowing that it was sin. But sin was in this world even before there was the law. God gave the law through Moses long ages after He made Adam. That is why, even before

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He gave the law, sin had already come upon all people through one man, Adam.

Therefore, we must know and believe that because we were born as the descendants of Adam, all people were born with sin in their hearts. Because we were Gentiles, we did not know the law, we did not know the word of God, we did not know what sin was, and we did not know the fact that the root of sin is not believing the word of God. Because we served idols every day and did not acknowledge God, we were in a state where sin was not established as sin, and we did not know that we were sinners. The reason we did not regard sin as sin was that we did not know the law of God, and God taught us, who did not know the law, what sin is through the commands of the law, and led us to Jesus Christ so that we could receive the remission of sins. The Savior to whom we go after knowing our sin is Jesus, and the content of that salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sins committed knowingly and the sins committed unknowingly, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood and died on the Cross to receive the judgment for those sins in our place. Believe in Jesus, who rose again from death and accomplished salvation.

"Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come"

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come" (Romans 5:14). One may ask whether Jesus Christ removed the sin of this world by Himself alone. That is right. Death reigned even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of

the transgression of Adam; it reigned over those who sinned without knowing the law; it reigned over everyone who had sin—and it says that Adam is a type of Him who was to come. It means that just as all became sinners because of one man, Adam, so the sins of all people were removed through the righteousness of God, by which Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It was to explain this that the apostle Paul said that Adam is a type of Him who was to come.

All these sinners who became sinners through one man and could only receive the judgment for sin, die, and go to hell—Jesus Christ came and saved them. For us who were born as the descendants of Adam and became sinners, how many Saviors are there? There is one. It is said, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)*. How many are there who have saved us from sin? There is one. There is only that one, Jesus, who among the triune God specially upheld the Father's will and came to this earth, received baptism from John and died on the Cross in order to remove our sins, and saved us. We must know that because of one man, Adam, we all reached a state of having automatically become sinners. And we must believe the fact that Jesus came to this earth to save us from sin, received baptism and was nailed to the Cross in order to remove our sins, and became the Savior. Do you believe that Jesus Christ became the Savior who removed the sin of this world once and for all with the water and the blood? Do you believe that Jesus removed the sin of this world by the same principle as Adam and became our true Savior?

Just as all became sinners because of one man, Adam, Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John and bore all the sins of mankind, received the judgment for sin on the Cross, shed

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His blood and died, and removed all our sins—and through Him, He became our perfect Savior. If all became sinners and could only go to hell because of one man, Adam, then through the one Man, Jesus Christ—by believing in that one Savior who came to this earth, received baptism, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and removed all our sins—all people can become righteous, and it means that He has made it so that if we believe in this way, we become righteous. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

Because the Bible says this, things like receiving the remission of sins through prayers of repentance or speaking of the doctrine of sanctification are all wrong. There is only one Savior, yet if one speaks of the doctrine of sanctification, then even though Jesus has saved us, we would also, by living good lives and offering prayers of repentance, become saviors to ourselves. If one says that without prayers of repentance one has sin and cannot become holy, one reaches the conclusion that Jesus did not save us completely. If one says that eternal salvation comes about by adding our prayers of repentance and holy living to what Jesus did in saving us, it does not make sense. The wrong is that, while saying they do not believe that way biblically, people actually believe that way in their minds. That is why the mindset is more important. The mindset must change. That very mindset of receiving the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross must change. Jesus said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5),* but the mindset of these people is that salvation comes not from the gospel of the water and the Spirit but from believing only in the blood of the Cross. The Cross is the conclusion; Jesus died on the Cross because He had received baptism, and had He not received baptism, He would not have died on the Cross. So we must think, believe, and discard

according to what Jesus said. That one reaches sanctification and becomes righteous through prayers of repentance is a logical belief that came out of the human mind. It is a belief that came out of human thinking.

But the Bible says that the one Man, Jesus Christ, came, received baptism, and had all our sins passed on to Him. While receiving baptism, Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, and it is written, *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water" (Matthew 3:16)*. Just as the sins of the people were passed on to the sacrificial offering when hands were laid on it in the Old Testament, that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist means that He had all the sins of mankind transferred to Him. Jesus is the Lamb of God and the sacrificial lamb, and John the Baptist played the role of the high priest who passed on sin as the representative of mankind. So since Jesus came to this earth, received baptism once and for all, died on the Cross once and for all, and rose again from death and saved us, Jesus has become our true Savior. But because people believe without knowing the truth, there is sin in their hearts even after they believe in Jesus, and so they have made the doctrine of sanctification, made the doctrine of prayers of repentance, and made the doctrine of justification by faith, and they believe in Jesus with these three things added on. They are believing by rationalizing. Therefore, Christianity has degenerated into a religion. Those who say they believe in Jesus have made all over again a doctrine of being saved that leaves Jesus out. All they need to do is know and believe just as it is that Jesus saved us with the water and the Spirit, but because they do not know this, they have made the doctrine of sanctification, the doctrine of justification by faith, and the doctrine of prayers of repentance.

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If we believe that Jesus has saved us, do we become righteous or not? We have become righteous.

Dear fellow believers, we believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ bore your sins and mine. When, how, and what did He bear? When Jesus received baptism from John, He fulfilled all righteousness. He received baptism, bearing all our sins, and just as it says, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29),* He bore the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death, and so became the eternal Savior to those who believe. We believe that. Do we have sin? No. So the one man, Adam, is a type of Him who was to come. Just as all became sinners through Adam, Jesus, too, came to this earth and, through that righteousness of God by which He saved us with the water and the blood, made all people righteous. Do you believe that all people become righteous through Jesus alone?

It is not prayers of repentance but confession

There is nothing here about receiving the remission of sins through prayers of sanctification or prayers of repentance. Then does a person who has received the remission of sins not offer prayers of repentance? He does not offer prayers of repentance, but he does offer prayers of confession. What kind of prayers of confession? When he has sinned, when he has gone wrong, he does as the word says: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).* The apostle John was a man who, by believing in Jesus, had obtained the righteousness of God perfectly and had no sin at all in his heart, and the statement that if a person who has received the remission of sins confesses

when he has sinned, He remits our sins and cleanses us does not mean that He now newly remits the sins of our souls. Because He already bore all the sins we commit in our whole lives through His baptism, received the punishment for sin on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us, it means that the moment we confess, the moment we confirm that gospel of the water and the Spirit—that our Lord has saved us with the water and the Spirit—the Lord gives peace to your hearts and mine. It means that God says He has removed even all those sins, and we obtain peace by believing that word. The apostle John, who wrote this Scripture, was a man who believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The apostle John said, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:6–8)*. He who believes in the Son has the witness, and that witness testifies that He has removed all your sins and mine with the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

So, that through one man sin entered the world, and that Adam is a type of Him who was to come, means that Jesus, like Adam, came into this world and completely removed the sins of all mankind, your sins and mine, through His thirty-three-year life. So it means that although we had sin, He made us completely righteous. This is the truth. It is not that sin disappears by offering prayers of repentance, saying, "Lord, I have done wrong," nor is it that, as a long time passes after believing in Jesus, one's body and heart become holy and one becomes a person who does not sin, changed to be perfect and flawless, and so obtains the qualification to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is absolutely not so. In worldly religions, too, sitting

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facing a wall in spiritual practice, doing yoga and abdominal breathing, not fighting, and not going out into the world and doing bad things is fine as far as it goes, but becoming holy when one makes an effort and falling apart when one does not is merely one method of taming the human body; it cannot make the heart righteous, make the heart sinless, or save us from all the sins committed by the weak flesh that cannot help but sin in this world. The One who can save us from sin is Jesus Christ. We are saved and come to be without sin by His having come to this earth and fulfilled the righteousness of God with the merit of what He did through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. Jesus saved us one hundred percent. Not even 0.1 percent of our merit, nor prayers of repentance, goes into it.

The word repentance means to turn around. Because the way we were going was wrong, repentance is turning around and believing this: that it is no use for me to make efforts, and that Jesus has removed my sins with the water and the blood. True repentance is turning around from what we wrongly believed and wrongly thought, coming back into that gospel of the water and the Spirit by which God has saved us, believing in our hearts that truth which God has accomplished, and accepting in our hearts that God has saved us. Saying, "We went wrong along the way, so please remit that too," is religion. Religion is making a god as one pleases and praying to it oneself. Faith is looking up at how God planned and saved us like this with the water and the Spirit, and simply accepting it, saying, "So that is what You have done; thank You." This is faith, and religion is what I make. Religion is what I make, what I am bound to and serve as a slave, and by which I accomplish my own will. So we must not believe in Christianity in a religious way. If we believe that way, we go to hell. Seen in the light of this word, today's Christianity is

enormously wrong. Christianity throughout the whole world, compared with the word, is so very wrong that this must be changed. Where the people of the whole world are now going wrong is in saying that one must be sanctified and that one receives the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance.

It says that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to remit our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. This word confession means revealing one's own nature. To confess is to say, "I have sinned." We confess before God that we have sinned because our flesh is weak; we are not begging Him to remit our sins. 1 John 1:9 says that if we confess our sins, He is faithful; it does not say that if we offer prayers of repentance, He remits them. Prayers of repentance and confession are different. But people, not knowing the original meaning, think that confession unconditionally means prayers of repentance. They say that through prayers of repentance one reaches sanctification, and once sanctified, one reaches glorification and becomes perfectly righteous at death. But the Bible says that if one believes in Jesus, even if one believes at the age of one, at that moment of believing one receives the remission of all sins once and for all and immediately becomes righteous. One becomes a person without sin, and after that, if, while living for the righteousness of God, one sins through one's shortcomings, one says, "I have sinned. But because the Lord has already removed all that sin, I thank You for saving me." Rather, when the righteous, after receiving the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, find something lacking in themselves as they live, they come to thank God because of it, come to give thanks that He saved someone as lacking as themselves, and come to confess their sins again. When I say, "I have committed this sin. I committed this sin because of my shortcomings," in my heart the Lord says, "Did I not receive

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baptism for you? Did I not die for you? I am your Savior." Saying, "Lord, it is really so. Even though I have actually fallen into this sin, I am so thankful," I come to love Jesus, my Savior, all the more. Rather than reaching sanctification by offering prayers of repentance for sin, one comes to love Him all the more because the Lord has removed even that sin. What we confirm when we confess is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has already been accomplished. Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including the sins we committed through our weakness, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving that judgment in our place, rose again from death, and gave us eternal remission of sins.

"The free gift is not like the offense"

"But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many" (Romans 5:15). One may ask whether the gift of salvation that God gives us, the salvation by which He saved us from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is the same as the offenses we commit. But it says that the free gift is not like the offense. This free gift means that God has saved us. It means that Jesus came to this earth and made us sinless. He saved you and me once and for all by coming to this earth, receiving baptism from John and bearing all sins, dying on the Cross, and rising again from death. We believe in that Jesus, and believing in Him is believing once and for all and receiving the remission of sins completely. Having believed once, we have reached righteousness and become completely righteous. If we believe

that Jesus became our Savior through His receiving baptism, His dying on the Cross, and His rising again from death, at that moment of believing we have become completely righteous. Dear fellow believers, were all your sins and mine passed on when Jesus received baptism? They were. Did Jesus, bearing the sin of the world, receive the judgment for sin on the Cross in your place and mine? He did. Did He rise again from death? He did. So when we come to know that our sins were passed on when Jesus received baptism, and that when Jesus died He bore our sins and died and received the judgment in our place, and when we come to know the fact that He rose again from death and became our true Savior, we believe in our hearts and reach the righteousness of God and become righteous before God.

Because Jesus removed all our sins with His baptism and the blood of the Cross, that gift of salvation which God has given us—this word free gift means a gift—is not like the offense. Jesus came to this earth and completely saved us with the water and the blood through His thirty-three-year life, but even after we have been saved, we can continue to commit offenses because of our shortcomings. We still sin, but what about it? Is it not greater that God saved us once and for all? This speaks of the relative weight. It is not like the offense.

The gift of the remission of sins that God gives is not something He gives every day, in the way people commit offenses. That it is not like the offense means that it is not that after we commit an offense we say, “Lord, please remit my sins,” and receive the remission of sins day by day. The gift of salvation by which God saved us was accomplished once and for all; it is not received every day by begging every day. Knowing that we would sin, He bore all the sin of this world once and for all when He received baptism from John. That is how He fulfilled all righteousness. It was because He bore all sins that

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He said all righteousness was fulfilled. So we must not believe in God according to our own thinking. Christians think that they sin and then receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance again, and they actually believe with that mindset and that faith. They think that if they sin in the world, all they have to do is come to church and offer prayers of repentance.

People believe that they receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance, but do sins disappear through prayers of repentance? It is just like stabbing someone to death and then saying, "Oh, I'm sorry." Saying that sins disappear by prayers of repentance alone is a doctrine one has made up oneself over the matter of sins disappearing at the price of the precious blood Jesus shed on the Cross. It is not that sins are washed away through prayers of repentance; it is because Jesus came to this earth and bore all that person's sins by receiving baptism from John—because He had all the offenses that person commits while living his whole life in this world, and the sin in his heart, passed on to Him once and for all by receiving baptism—that that person has no sin, and it is because He bore all those sins and shed His blood on the Cross that there is no judgment for sin. Faith must be right, and when faith is not right and one says that one receives the remission of sins through prayers of repentance, it is not believing in that salvation which God has given.

So it says that if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. Our Lord came to this earth and lived until He was thirty-three and then departed, and at the age of thirty He received baptism from John and bore all the sins of mankind, died on the Cross and washed away our sins and received the judgment, and rose again and saved us. We human beings sin until the moment we die, but it means that the gift of

salvation by which God has saved us abounds. Just as tap water left running all night overflows and gushes over, it means that whatever offenses we may have, He has saved us abundantly from all those sins. Because He has removed even all the sins we commit after believing in Jesus, we have been saved completely. Because He bore those sins by receiving baptism and received the judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross, because God's salvation is far greater than our committing of offenses, because He saved us abundantly with the water and the blood, whoever believes this receives a complete salvation that lacks nothing at all. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? The abounding gift is the salvation that Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross because of that sin, and rising again from death.

Justification by faith and the doctrine of sanctification spoken of in theology, and the prayers of repentance spoken of in religion—all of these turn out to be wrong when measured against the word of this one verse, verse 15. If we apply the doctrine of justification by faith to each verse from verse 12 on, does it fit? It does not fit. If we apply the doctrine of sanctification, does it fit? It does not fit. If we apply the doctrine of repentance, does it fit? It does not fit. If we apply the yardstick that one is saved by believing only in the blood of the Cross, does it fit? It does not fit. Then what fits? If we apply the yardstick of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it fits exactly.

If so, the justification by faith and the doctrine of sanctification spoken of in theology do not fit. They are wrong. For if, in order to become holy by believing in justification by faith or the doctrine of sanctification, a person must keep on changing, and must keep on being changed to be holy by living

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the life of faith well, then we will in the end become sinners, go to hell, deny the righteousness of God, and turn our backs on God; we cannot obtain salvation that way. Because our very capacity is insufficient, if God had demanded that of us, none of us could obtain salvation. What Jesus did when He came to this earth to save us was to save us with the water and the Spirit. So the justification by faith which says that one has sin but is called sinless because one believes in Jesus is a man-made doctrine. Calling someone sinless when he has sin is something that passes only among human beings, and so it is wrong. Since Jesus Christ received baptism from John for all sinners and bore their sins, and shed His blood and died on the Cross, whoever believes in the remission of sins He has given has received the great gift of salvation before God. Just as many died because of Adam's sin, the sins of those who believe have been removed because of the baptism Jesus Christ received and the blood of the Cross. Let us obtain this salvation of the remission of sins that God has given, by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is so because only the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth of salvation that God has given.

"And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification" (Romans 5:16). I explained much in verse 15, and verse 16 is the very same word.

"By one Man's obedience many will be made righteous"

"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of

the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17). Death reigns because of sin. Through one man's offense all became sinners, and who is the king of that sin? It is death. Because death is the king of sin, whoever had sin had to die and had to go to hell. But likewise, it is the righteousness of God that those who receive abundance of the gift of salvation, that is, of grace and of the gift of righteousness, will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. God sent His Son to this earth, had Him receive baptism from John, and had Him die on the Cross, and so removed all our sins. By believing in this righteousness of God, we receive the gift of salvation in abundance. So by believing in Jesus Christ, we are saved, obtain the righteousness of God, obtain new life, and reign. We reign not as kings of sin but as kings of righteousness, and as children of God we reign forever in the kingdom of God.

"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life" (Romans 5:18). Here we must ask this question and answer it. Is it right that we became sinners because of one man's sin? Did you become sinners because you committed sins, or did you become sinners because your ancestor Adam sinned against God and you inherited that sin? Because of one man we automatically became sinners. Then does one who believes in the righteous act by which the one Man, Jesus Christ, saved us become righteous? If one truly believes in Jesus, does one become righteous, does one become a person without sin? Yes. Here it says that many were justified and came to life. The one righteous act refers to the righteousness of God. That Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again and saved us was something He did because God the Father had Him do it. That is why it is

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the righteousness of God. It means it is the right act of salvation by which God saved us. It says that many were justified and came to life. Being justified does not mean that one receives the remission of sins only at the time of believing and then, after believing, reaches sanctification by offering prayers of repentance every day. It is not a half salvation. Being justified is absolutely not "justification" in the sense of merely being called righteous. If one believes in Jesus but believes only in the blood of the Cross, there is sin in one's heart. So people say, "Ah, this means being regarded as righteous in legal terms because one believes," but that is a baseless argument.

"*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)*. Here one man and one Man appear. This one man is Adam, and the one Man is Jesus Christ, who came as the Savior of mankind. The one man, Adam, made all mankind sinners by his offense, but Jesus Christ obeyed the will of God the Father, received baptism from John, bore the sin of the world and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so made those who believe in Jesus completely righteous. He made them righteous, people without sin. The reason He made us righteous is that He had all the sins of the world, including of course all our trespasses, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and received that judgment in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross.

"*Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20)*. It says that the law entered in order to make our offenses abound. We were originally born as the descendants of Adam and are those who sin all our lives, but even when we sinned, we did not know that it was sin. Without the law one does not know that it is sin, but it means that when the law of God's commands

came, our sins became more numerous. It means that our sins were many to begin with, but we came to realize and know our sins much more. That is why it says that the law entered that the offense might abound. But that where sin abounded, grace abounded much more means that a person who acknowledges God through His commands and comes to know his sins well, thinking, "So I am such a lacking person," comes to know that he is one who deserves to go to hell, and comes to believe all the more thankfully that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism, and died on the Cross and saved him. He comes to believe joyfully. Through the law a person comes to realize his sins, and the person who has realized his sins more comes to receive a great salvation because of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the righteousness of God.

"So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:21). It says that sin reigned in death, and this time the grace God has given—that is, the grace of salvation by which Jesus saved us with the water and the blood—has saved us completely through the righteousness of God, and so has made us children of God, so that we, too, have become kings. It means that He has thus made us reign. Therefore, it concludes that by believing in Jesus Christ we have received the remission of all our sins and have come to obtain eternal life. Here it has said, "Through one man," "through one man."

Before you and before Jesus, there was Adam, so Adam was involved first. We were born as the descendants of Adam, and God the Father sent His only Son to this earth, had Him bear the sins of those descendants of Adam and even the sin of Adam through the baptism He received from John, had Him bear the sin of the world, had Him die on the Cross, and raised Him from death, and so made His Son the Savior of mankind, your Savior.

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Believe. You must believe. Those who believe are saved, and those who try to become righteous by offering prayers of repentance, being sanctified, living good lives, not sinning, living piously, performing many rituals, not telling lies, and living nice and good lives go to hell. So they say that if you go to the kingdom of heaven, you find many who were somewhat lacking on this earth, and if you go to hell, you find many who lived good lives. This word is continually repetitive. It is repetitive, but in fact it is always spoken from a different angle. We must believe in Jesus. Dear fellow believers, do you have sin, or not? No. Has the one Jesus become your true Savior and mine? He has. Then must we believe, or must we not? We must believe. You do not need to know about things like the doctrine of sanctification, justification by faith, or the doctrine of justification. They are useless wordplay. Like the words of a storyteller who dresses up the same story entertainingly, philosophers only say that it can be thought of this way and felt that way, and their thoughts go round and round with absolutely no right answer. Take a look at Christian books. There is nothing stated decisively. There is only philosophical talk. If the Bible says it this way, we believe it this way.

Because the one Jesus Christ, who is God, came to this earth clothed in human flesh—because the Son of God saved us—we have been saved. Whoever believes is saved. If you believe this, you have been saved. Honestly speaking, being saved by your offering prayers of repentance well or by living a sanctified life does not work at all. If you try to obtain salvation by being sanctified, or try to obtain salvation by offering many prayers of repentance, then since you had no time to offer prayers of repentance, you have to go out and up to the rooftop to offer prayers of repentance, go home and offer prayers of repentance, offer prayers of repentance tomorrow at dawn too—I cannot tell

you how many prayers of repentance there are to offer. It is nonsense. If Jesus had told us to remove the remaining sins ourselves by offering prayers of repentance, then we would be saviors to ourselves. Then what need would there be for Jesus? One might as well live a good life on one's own and be saved. If one can do 5 percent, one can also do 95 percent, and if one cannot do even 0.1 percent, one cannot do 100 percent either. Saying before God, "God, You take care of 95 percent, and I will take care of 5 percent," is human logic, not God's logic. God's logic is as follows. God is almighty, and He came in mercy and saved us completely with the righteousness of God, with the mercy of God. He saved you completely. I give thanks before God. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Let us always keep our faith

< Romans 5:17–21 >

“For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

We reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ

In Romans chapter 5, the apostle Paul continues to say, “Through one man we became sinners, and through the One, Jesus Christ, we have become righteous.” *“For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17)*. Just as because of Adam and Eve sin came upon all people, death came, and death reigned, we who have received the remission of sins through Jesus Christ have come to receive abundantly the

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gift of God's righteousness, that is, the blessing by which God causes us to receive the remission of sins, makes us His children, and lets us enjoy all the glory of heaven. That is really so. Just as death reigned through one man, through Jesus Christ we really come to reign.

We have really received abundance of the gift of righteousness and received all blessings because of Jesus Christ. So there is something we must know properly as we go on living our life of faith. It is that although the sins you and I commit are also sins before God, fundamentally, Adam and Eve, the ancestors of mankind, sinned by not believing the word of God and came to death, and so we inherited that sin and truly became sinners, and we also became sinners by committing sins. But likewise, because Jesus came to this earth and did the right work of salvation, those who believe have been declared to have no sin and have come to life.

We must know that, fundamentally, God permitted all such offenses and weaknesses in Adam and Eve in order to give us the gospel of the water and the Spirit in Jesus Christ. It says, *"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),* and it has really come to be so. Just as Adam and Eve became sinners by failing to obey the word of God and made all mankind sinners, so Jesus Christ came to this earth and, by obeying God the Father, bore our sins, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior, and through this we have become righteous by faith.

So, as for those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, many people become righteous. They become people who have no sin. We must know that God has saved and blessed you and me in this way. I hope you will know the plan that God the Father planned in His Son Jesus Christ, and the work by

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which, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that fulfilled that plan, He removed our sins, saved us from sin, and made us the children of God. When we come to know this, our faith can become truly firm. Although we were born on this earth having inherited sin through our parents, through the salvation by which Jesus Christ saved us from sin, we were able to truly believe and become the children of God. We were able not only to receive the remission of sins but also to become the children of God. We must know that this was God's plan for us and God's blessing for us, and we must live with such faith within God's providence and plan. The salvation by which He made us the children of God is clearly revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all by the baptism He received from John, and He received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross. The righteousness and life that Jesus gave by rising again from death, we have received by faith.

"The law entered that the offense might abound"

We must truly examine the will of God. Rather than looking only at ourselves and only at our own feelings, we must know what will God has toward us, how God the Father has saved us through His Son Jesus Christ, in what state we were before we were saved, and how we came to be saved, and we must become those who truly believe. God says, *"Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20–21)*. The statement that the law entered that the offense might abound does not mean that

the law makes people sin. It means that God gave us the law—giving as the word of the law the commandments of what to do and what not to do—in order to teach us that we were born with sin and are those who commit these sins.

So the law is not useless and unnecessary. Through the law we know sin and can discern whether we have done right or wrong before God. Yet there are those who speak of the uselessness of the law. Even among those who say they believe in Jesus, there are some such people. There are many who say that the law is now abolished and therefore unnecessary. But what we must know is that through the law we come to know that we commit sin, and that through the truth of the water and the Spirit by which Jesus Christ saved us from sin we have been saved from that judgment; we must not say or think that the law, that is, God's commandments, is useless. We who knew that we would be judged by the law have escaped that judgment by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For Jesus, by the baptism He received from John, had not only our sins of breaking the law but all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and then received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

The Old Testament, too, is the promise of salvation for us

Some people say that the Old Testament is all over and done with. So there are also people who say that there is no need even to read the Old Testament, and that the Old Testament speaks only about the people of Israel. Such people know far too little. The Old Testament is the part where God, while showing what

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kind of people we human beings are before God, what offenses we commit, what weaknesses we have, and how we have broken the law of God, tells us that you and I also have the same weak points, and promises salvation, saying, “Since you are like this, I will save you,” by sending a Savior in the future. The New Testament is the part where He fulfills that promise. We must not call the word of the Old Testament useless. The word of the Old Testament is in fact more concrete and practical. So when we read it, there are times when it is even more of a blessing to us. Because you and I are also such people. So, through the word of the Old Testament, we must come to know that we are truly lacking before God, and know that we are those who have gone to Jesus Christ and received true salvation by faith. I have spoken of just one example, but in reality people have many such things. I am saying this because there are people who say, “The Old Testament is already all in the past, so what need is there to know it deeply? It is enough just to know the New Testament well.”

What is it that the Bible says, that the apostle Paul is saying now? It is that we became sinners through one man and have become righteous through the One, Jesus Christ. It is that because He did that right act by which He saved us from all sins, we have become people without sin and have been saved by believing that fact. This is exactly what it says. But because false people scatter absurd false teachings about many matters, and if we know wrongly and learn wrongly we are greatly affected and suffer great loss, I am giving this word in various parts.

I hope that you and I will know that, before we became sinners by committing sins, Adam and Eve first became sinners by sinning against God, and because we were born as their descendants, we inherited that sin just as it was, just as many were made sinners by one man’s offense. That is why Adam is

called our ancestor, the ancestor of mankind. Coming down the line, we inherited all of his heart, nature, and conduct, his weaknesses and sin. So we became sinners, and we, too, sin just as Adam did, but through Jesus Christ's saving us, we have been saved by faith. So it says that, by knowing and believing the fact that Jesus Christ is truly our Savior and that Jesus Christ saved you and me with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have truly been saved from sin, become the children of God, and actually obtained eternal life. This is the very truth and the way to go to the kingdom of heaven. It is to realize this way. It is to come to understand the way to go to the kingdom of heaven. That way is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled as promised. Jesus, who bore all the sins of the world once and for all by the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thereby brought us who believe to eternal life.

The one righteous act that Jesus did

Among people, there is no one who does not sin. It said that by one man's offense many were made sinners. All people sin. There may be many who try not to sin, but there is no one who does not sin. That is why everyone must believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior who came to this earth to save us from sin. We obtain true salvation by knowing the facts of how Jesus Christ bore our sins, how He received the judgment, how He saved us from sin and destruction, and how He gave us new life, and by believing the fact of what Jesus Christ did for us. So we must know Jesus Christ and believe in Him. We must believe that Jesus Christ came to this earth and did the one righteous act. It says "*through*

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one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life" (Romans 5:18). It means that He did a righteous work. The work by which Jesus received baptism from John and had the sins of you and me transferred onto His body is the very righteous work. And His going to the Cross, being nailed to it, and receiving the judgment for sin is the righteous work. We must know this and truly believe it. Today's Scripture passage is speaking of this.

But this word must be fulfilled in the hearts of you and me, just as it was actually fulfilled in the heart of the apostle Paul. We must actually be able to make this confession of faith. When we say we are sinners before God, in fact we say we are sinners because we have committed sins, but before that, we became sinners because we were born as descendants of a sinner, descendants of Adam, and we came to commit offenses because we were born with sin, and because of all those offenses and the sin we inherited we could only go to hell and perish; yet our Lord truly saved us with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must have the faith that believes this, the true faith and true knowledge that can truly confess this. Only then can we be called true people of faith. When this word takes root in the hearts of you and me, then even when our hearts waver and go wrong while living in this world, we can stand firm before the Lord by the faith that believes in the salvation by which our Lord saved us. And we can also understand other people. You and I must have the knowledge and faith that knows the fact that those people, too, were originally born as descendants of Adam and inherited sin, which is why they are people who commit such offenses and people who have such weaknesses; that they, too, absolutely need a true Savior; that this is why the Savior came; and that this is why, through our preaching that Savior to them, they, too, obtain salvation. What we are to engrave on our hearts

and confess is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sin we inherited and the sins we have committed, transferred to Him once and for all by the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death and saved us.

Keep your faith and be ready to answer

The Lord said that when the time for Him to come has almost arrived *"because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12),* and it is really so. But we must hold perfectly the faith by which God saved us. Also, not only must we have the faith we believe, but we must also indirectly know the knowledge of those among the people who believe in Jesus who know wrongly and are spreading wrong knowledge. We must know, "What they are saying is wrong." Only then can you and I keep our faith. If we do not know the words of those false people and accept them as they are, we are ruined. We are ruined both in spirit and in body. We come to the very same state as having a lot of money and then having it taken away. So we must know about such matters.

The apostle Paul, through this word of the Book of Romans, explains concretely what true faith is, what the righteousness obtained by faith is, what kind of people we ourselves were, and what salvation Jesus Christ accomplished for us by the one righteous act. So we must know and understand this word by faith and engrave it on our hearts. Although it is a word we all really know, and we have all received the remission of sins, in order to bring other people back to what is right, we must truly keep hearing the word, remove the dregs from our hearts, and

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have our hearts well set in order by faith, and always prepare by faith the words with which we can answer those who want to ask about the truth. When someone really asks, we must be able to answer right away.

It said that the law entered that the offense might abound. People try to keep the law, which cannot be kept, and also call those who try to keep it very righteous, but that is not so. Even though that may look righteous in human terms, it is not perfect righteousness. The reason God gave us, through the word of the Scriptures, the commandments of what to do and what not to do was to reveal and teach us that we are really people who commit many offenses. So, when people who try to become righteous by keeping the law, people who try to become truly upright before God by offering prayers of repentance, those people with such wrong faith, speak that way, we must tell them that that is not so, and tell them to look at the word of God. We must tell them that it says *"the law entered that the offense might abound" (Romans 5:20)*, that it says *"by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)*, and that, if we look at the word of Galatians, it says *"as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse" (Galatians 3:10)*.

So we must know the word of God and know what this word is talking about, so that we can preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to them when we see the opportunity. We must first be people who ourselves believe and can preach the fact that, to save us—who have weak bodies and hearts that cannot keep the law—from sin, Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us, and we must truly be people of faith who keep such faith and can also save others. Before others, we ourselves must first become people who have such knowledge and faith. Just as it says *"where sin abounded, grace abounded much more"*

(Romans 5:20), even though we are really such people, the gift and blessing by which God saved us have abounded. Jesus Christ came to this earth, bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and saved us abundantly. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we are to preach also clearly makes known the fact that Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all by the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross.

Therefore, by faith we truly become righteous, by faith we become people without sin and the children of God, by faith we obtain eternal life, and by faith we come to obtain the riches and glory of heaven. Believing in this way is precisely faith. It is faith that believes in what is true. So, having such faith, we must become those who preach it rightly to others as well. Not with a faith that, like the legalists, holds an absurd belief and asks God to be pleased to accept them for their own zeal and their own devotion, but knowing and believing that God loves us and has saved us from sin, we must be saved by faith alone and by faith preach this way of salvation to others as well, and preach by faith and live by faith so that what Jesus Christ did in coming to this earth and saving us will not be in vain. ✉

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CHAPTER

6

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You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The age of living by believing in the fact that He put an end to sin through the baptism He received from John

< Romans 6:1–2 >

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

At first glance, Romans chapter 6 looks like a chapter of morality that teaches how the saints should live, but in reality it is a chapter of theology that calls us to reflect on the fact that the sin of the world has already been ended in Jesus Christ and that the age of a new life has been opened. To the question, *"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1)*, Paul answers firmly, *"Certainly not!" (Romans 6:2)*. The reason is contained in the very rhetorical question of the text, *"How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:2)*. Here, the expression "died to sin" does not refer to a subjective state of having come to no longer commit sin through human will or resolve. Rather, it speaks of the fact that we have objectively

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been delivered from the dominion of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Those who believe in the baptism Jesus received from John are those who participate by faith in that work by which their sins were washed away

"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:3–4).

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Paul believes in speaks of the fact that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and that by being crucified and receiving the judgment for all sins in our place, He bestowed eternal salvation on us. When we look at it within the structure of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the event in which Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John becomes, together with the punishment of the Cross, the decisive event that constitutes the objective fact of our salvation. This event of the baptism He received from John is the decisive starting point at which the sin of the world was passed on to the body of Jesus Christ. Therefore, for us to be united with Him by believing in the baptism He received from John and in the Cross is to become those who acknowledge that our sins have already been passed on to Him. Through the baptism Christ received from John, we *"were buried with Him through baptism into death" (Romans 6:4),* and now, just as God raised Him, we also have become those who walk in new life.

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Those who have died with Jesus Christ live again with Christ

"For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin" (Romans 6:5–7).

The text concludes, *"He who has died has been freed from sin" (Romans 6:7)*. This is a word that emphasizes that our salvation is not something obtained through our emotions, but something received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the objective truth. Since the dominion of sin is valid only for those who have sin in their hearts, sin can no longer exercise any power over those who have already died with Jesus Christ on the Cross. The event in which our old man was united together with the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and with the work of the Cross is not a state reached through our training in faith or our resolve. It is the result of the work of redemption in which Jesus Christ Himself bore the sin of the world by receiving the baptism John gave at the Jordan River, and received the judgment for that sin on the Cross in our place. Through this, we have become born-again people who are no longer slaves of sin. By believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, our being children of God has been guaranteed forever.

Those who have taken part in the baptism and death of Jesus Christ are those who have received eternal atonement

"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God" (Romans 6:8–10).

The text is a word that confirms that the death of Christ was one in which *"He died to sin once for all" (Romans 6:10)*, and that His resurrection is the decisive event that has brought new life to us. Until now, while living a religious life, we had been those who tried to solve our own problem of sin through repeated repentance and sanctification. But now, because Jesus Christ has washed away all our sins and bestowed eternal salvation on us through the baptism He received from John once and for all in history and through the blood of the Cross, we no longer need to live oppressed by religion. Therefore, for those who believe in the baptism Jesus received from John, in the Cross, and in the resurrection, the dominion of sin has now ended, and a new life of living again to God has begun. Those who have this faith have become new creations who can live in the new age.

Live by faith in the fact of the salvation already accomplished in our hearts

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11).

Paul commands, *"Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11)*.

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This does not mean that we should strive to reach such a state; it means that we should acknowledge, just as it is, the fact of the salvation God has already accomplished, and live by faith. True faith is not an effort to produce some holy state within myself by my own doing. Rather, it is the faith that accepts, just as it is, the fact that Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and has already paid the price of our sins in full with the blood of the Cross. The text tells us to receive into our hearts by faith that salvation which the Lord has completed through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only when we are assured of the fact that we have become *"alive to God" (Romans 6:11)* in Christ Jesus do we at last become true believers. Only those who have been born again from sin can stand firm on the foundation of the true gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Those who are under grace refuse the dominion of sin

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:12–14).

The fundamental reason sin cannot have dominion over us is that we are no longer under the curse of the law but are in the grace of God. We are those who stand by faith under the grace of the perfect salvation completed through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To stand under grace means that we have

left the system of the old age, in which sin reigned, and that our belonging has been moved to the new system of rule, in which the righteousness of God reigns. Since the dominion has already been transferred to Christ, the saints have now become those who have the real faith and authority to do as the word says—*"do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin" (Romans 6:13)*—and to present their members only *"as instruments of righteousness to God" (Romans 6:13).*

We have come to live a precious life as slaves of righteousness

"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness" (Romans 6:15–19).

Paul is asking whose slaves we are, and this is an urging, going beyond a mere matter of personal choice, to recognize the reality of the master to whom we already belong. We, who were originally slaves of sin, have become, through the work of redemption of Jesus Christ, those of whom it has been declared,

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"Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:18). The reason we have become those saved from sin is that God paid a tremendous price within the gospel of the water and the Spirit and bought us. Therefore, we have now become those who can live as slaves of righteousness leading to holiness.

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life

"For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:20–23).

The wages of sin is unchangingly death, but God has granted us eternal life *"in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)* as a gift He gives freely. The remission of sins is not a product obtained as a reward for man's ceaseless training or sanctification, but the gift of salvation given freely to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now the saints, who have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, bear *"fruit to holiness" (Romans 6:22)* and live assured of everlasting life, its final fruit. All these blessed outcomes are possible only on the historical foundation that Jesus Christ has already accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Romans chapter 6 declares the history of those who have already died and come to life

Romans chapter 6 teaches that the saints who have already been saved from sin are those who have been united in baptism with Christ Jesus and have participated together in His death and resurrection. That historical turning point lies in the work of the resurrection, in which Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was crucified and shed His blood to receive the judgment for sin in our place, and then rose again from the dead. Therefore, the life of the saints is not a life of painful struggle to put sin to death. Rather, it is a new life of acknowledging that the power of sin, which has already died, can no longer rule over me, and of living by faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Romans chapter 6 concludes not with an exhortation to moral resolve, but with the historical declaration, “You are already in a holy place.”

The remission of sins and the salvation received by those who believe in the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross

For a long time I had said that I believed in Jesus, but deep in my heart the same question always remained. It was the question of whether I was really a person who had received the remission of sins, and the question of why the guilt in my heart did not disappear even though I prayed and repented. At that time I confessed my faith as a faith that believed in the blood of the Cross, but in reality I was judging the state of my salvation by the standard of how much I had repented that day and how sincere I had been. So my faith was always a repetition of

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prayers of repentance and a tense life, and it was a life of an endless vicious cycle in which I had to seek the remission of sins again every time I committed a sin.

Then one day, through the word of the Bible, I came to know clearly for the first time why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist. As I saw the word that Jesus received baptism from John, saying, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, I came to know the fact that all our sins were passed on to the body of Jesus through the baptism He received from John. Just as the sacrificial offering received the laying on of hands from the sinner in the Old Testament, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. From this word, I came to know the fact that Jesus, by receiving baptism from John, bore my past sins, and even my present and future sins, and even the sin I inherited from Adam. At that time, I came to know the fact that my sins had been passed on to Jesus and washed away.

After that, I came to look again by faith upon Jesus, who, by receiving baptism from John, had the sin of the world, which included my sins, transferred to Him and received the judgment for sin. Before, the baptism Jesus received from John and the work of the Cross had seemed to me a work that moves the heart, but after I came to know the meaning of the work of the baptism Jesus received from John, Jesus began to appear to me as the One who had my sins transferred to Him. Jesus began to appear to me not as One who vaguely suffered for me, but as the One who, by receiving baptism from John, had the sin of the world, including even my sins, transferred onto His body once and for all and received the judgment for sin. So I came to know the fact that I had become no longer a sinner, but a person who had received the remission of sins. Now I have come to know that the sin of the world, which included all my sins, was passed on

to the body of Jesus, who received baptism from John, and that Jesus received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, rose again from death, and became my Savior. The moment I came to know the meaning of this word, that Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, the guilt and fear that had been weighing down my heart were cut off from my heart.

Until then, I had felt like a person saved from sin only when my heart was in a good state, but when my weakness was exposed and I committed sin, I used to think that my salvation had collapsed. The basis of my salvation had been repentance and the self-pride that came when I had lived well according to the word before God, but now there arose in me the faith that my salvation had been completed because of the fact that all my sins were passed on to the body of Jesus through the work of the baptism He received from John. I came to know the fact that all my sins had been ended through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. I came to be assured of the word *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* that Jesus spoke as He died nailed to the Cross.

Now I have become a person who no longer strives to receive the remission of sins. I have become a person who has received the remission of sins in my heart by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and in the blood of the Cross. I am still weak, but my status as a sinner has now come to an end, and now I stand before God as a saved person, as a preacher who preaches the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I give thanks to the Lord, who has given me this confession of faith. I have now become a person who testifies of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Because Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the work of the baptism He received from John,

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received the judgment for sin, and washed away that sin completely with the blood He shed hanging on the Cross, I was able to become no longer a sinner, but a person who lives by the faith of having received the remission of sins, that is, a born-again person. This is what it means that I have become a saved person within the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I give thanks to the Lord, who has saved me from sin. Hallelujah! ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Our faith of having been baptized into Christ Jesus

< Romans 6:1–4 >

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The gift of salvation God has given through the law of faith

The apostle Paul said that God gave the law of faith and saved sinners. It means that God sent His Son to this earth and saved all those who believe in their hearts in the baptism that Son received, in the blood of the Cross, in His death, and in His resurrection—that is, those who acknowledge that they are sinners bound for hell and believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has saved us from sin by the water and the blood. Our obtaining salvation is not through the law or circumcision, or by

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works. A sinner obtains salvation entirely by the faith that believes in that salvation by which Jesus Christ saved us by the water and the blood. The apostle Paul said that we obtain salvation by the faith that knows Jesus as our Savior and believes that He has saved us.

The apostle Paul also preached the word, *"By one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19)*, and now in Romans chapter 6 he speaks of the content of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach. First, the water and the Spirit means that God the Father sent His only Son to this earth and had Him receive baptism. Because He had His Son receive baptism on His body and thereby washed away all the sins of us human beings, Jesus said to Nicodemus that one must be born of water and the Spirit. God came in person and bore our sins, and this is because He bore the sin of mankind through the baptism of John the Baptist; and because He thereby washed away the sin of mankind, it is said to be "of water and the Spirit."

The water refers to the baptism Jesus received when He came to this earth in the flesh, and the Spirit refers to the work of salvation by which Jesus, as God and as the Savior sent by God the Father, received baptism and washed away all the sins of mankind, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death to save us.

The apostle John speaks of this gospel of the water and the Spirit in 1 John, the apostle Paul speaks of it in Galatians, and it is spoken of in many places in the Bible, but it may seem as though the apostle Paul does not emphasize the baptism as much as we do. The apostle Paul was a Roman with Roman citizenship, yet in substance he was a Jew. So he was fluent in both Greek and Hebrew, he was well versed in the law, and after meeting Jesus he was a man very well versed also in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of that salvation by which Jesus

saved us. That apostle Paul speaks about the baptism of Jesus in Romans chapter 6. He said, *"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1)*, and the word 'grace' means 'gift.'

Jesus came to this earth, bore our sins, washed them all away, received the judgment, and rose again from death to save us, and this is the gift of salvation by which God the Father sent His Son and saved us. Jesus was a gift to you and me. That Jesus came to this earth, bore our sins through His baptism, died hanging on the Cross, and rose again from death to save us—this is the gift of God, and it is a gift given freely. God had compassion on us, who, as descendants of Adam and Eve, were in a situation where we could not but go to hell because of our own sins, and He sent His Son and through that Son gave us the gift of salvation freely. The Son of God is the Savior who saves us, and He is also the gift of salvation. This is because that Son bore our sins, received the judgment for sin, died, and rose again to save us. God loved us through His Son, and He demonstrated through that Son how much He loves us. *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)*. When we look at the birth of the Son of God, the baptism He received, and His shedding of blood and death on the Cross, we come to know how much God loved us and how surely He removed our sins. We can clearly see that gift of love in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, and after paying the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, He rose again from death and gave life.

The apostle Paul deals with this part rigorously in Romans chapter 6. In chapter 3, while developing the word that we have been justified through the blood of Christ, he does not say a single word about the baptism. But coming to Romans chapter

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6, the apostle Paul speaks of what kind of gospel of the water and the Spirit he believes in. Looking at this word, we can see that the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul believes in are exactly the same. Because we have known and accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preaches, our faith is the faith of the apostle Paul, and the faith of the apostle Paul is the faith of you and me.

"How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

So, to the question of whether we should continue in sin that grace may abound, whether we should sin as much as we please because we have received the remission of sins, the apostle Paul says that it can never be so. *"Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:2–3)*. The apostle Paul says that you and I have died to sin. In Galatians, too, he says, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*, saying that he himself has been crucified with Jesus.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are those who have died to sin. Why are they dead? When have we ever died? It is that after you and I have believed in the Lord, we say in our hearts, "I am dead." A dead person says nothing. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are people who have once died because of sin, who have died with Jesus Christ, and who, having obtained new life through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, live a new life. So we can understand the apostle Paul's confession of faith, *"Therefore, if*

anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Then when did we die to sin? The next word speaks of that. *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3)*. Here the word 'into' appears. Jesus came to this earth, received baptism, bore the sin of mankind, and died on the Cross, and to say that Jesus bore our sins means that our sins were all passed on to Jesus once and for all through His baptism, and that the sins of you and me were all passed on to Jesus. And it means that our sins have been washed away. Since the sins that were in us were passed on to Jesus, our sins have been washed away clean, and our sins are on the body of Jesus. We believe in Jesus, who bore our sins in this way and died on the Cross, as our Savior. So, to have been baptized into Christ Jesus is to take part with one's heart and to be united in one's heart in the fact that my sins were passed on when Jesus received baptism. It means that, because this person's sins were passed on to Jesus Christ, the death of Jesus Christ becomes the very death of this person, who has been united in heart. Our believing that we died together with Him is based on the fact that Jesus bore sin. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in our place, and He rose again from death and gave life to us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The faith of the apostle Paul is being spoken of here. Through the baptism Jesus received, the sins of you and me were passed on. Since all the sin of mankind was passed on to Jesus when He received baptism from John the Baptist, the sins of you and me have been washed away. Sin was in us, but since it was passed on to Jesus, sin has been washed away from us, and Jesus has

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borne our sins. Our sins are on the body of Jesus. So John the Baptist cried out, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. Jesus, bearing the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and died. Because the baptism Jesus received was in order to bear our sins, and Jesus' death on the Cross was our death, that righteous work Jesus did in order to save us is identified with you and me. Because Jesus did the work of saving us, for those who believe this, their sins were passed on to Jesus at that time, and through His bearing our sins and being nailed to the Cross, we also died at the same time as Jesus' death. Why is that? It is because our sin was passed on to Him, and so we died with Him. It is because it says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*.

People go to hell because of sin, are cut off from God because of sin, suffer because of sin, and suffer at the hands of Satan the devil because of sin. So this is what it means that we are identified with Him. Since Jesus had our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism, our sins have been passed on and our sins have been washed away. And because Jesus died on the Cross, our sins—our old man—died together with Him. Since Jesus came to this earth, received baptism, and died hanging on the Cross to save us from sin, those who believe by uniting their hearts with what Jesus did, die with Jesus and live again with Jesus. They have risen again with Jesus.

Be united in heart with the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory

of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Because we were united in heart with the baptism Jesus received and were baptized into Him, and because Jesus received baptism, our sins were passed on and our sins were washed away. The sins of those who are united in heart have been washed away. Because Jesus bore our sins, received the judgment for sin hanging on the Cross, and died, if we, too, unite our hearts and take part in Jesus' baptism and take part together in Jesus' Cross, then with Him our sins are passed on, we too have received the judgment for our sins, and since He rose again from death, we too have risen again with Him. This is faith. This is the faith that is the very core of the faith that believes in Christ. If we have believed in Christ and died with Him, we too have died together with Him, and since He rose again, if we believe by uniting our hearts with Him, we too obtain new life and live again.

So for those who have received the remission of sins, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. Christ dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and just as Jesus Christ obeyed God the Father, we too come to obey, following the word of God. This is precisely the life of faith, and this is the essence of faith and the confession of faith that the apostle Paul speaks of. The apostle Paul is a man who has exactly the same faith as we do. The apostle Paul speaks of this constantly. Without the baptism Jesus received from John, there is no death on the Cross either. If there were no bearing of our sins by Jesus through His baptism, there would be no death of Jesus on the Cross either. As Jesus died hanging on the Cross, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and what does this mean? He died saying that He had finished all of it: the work of washing away and removing all our sins, the work of receiving the judgment for all those sins, the work of saving us from sin, and the work of raising us again

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from death. After Jesus died hanging on the Cross, a Roman soldier came and pierced Jesus' side with a spear to confirm whether He had really died, and at that time, it says, from there *"immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34)*. So it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished by the water and the blood. The Bible says conclusively that the Lord saved us by the water and the blood. The gospel of the water and the Spirit, which we are to believe by uniting our hearts with it, makes clear both the passing on of sins and the judgment. Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place because of those sins, and He rose again from death and gave new life.

But ordinary people say that they receive the remission of sins by believing in the religion of the Cross. They say that because Jesus died for us, if we believe in that Jesus, we are saved. That is a religion made by man. Jesus clearly said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. One must be born of water and the Spirit without fail. To be born of water and the Spirit is a word spoken on the premise of this complete gospel of the water and the Spirit: that the Lord came to this earth, bore our sins, had them passed on to Him, and washed us, and on that premise received the judgment for sin on the Cross and rose again from death to give us new life.

The religion of the Cross that has left out the baptism

But the religion of the Cross that has come down to this day is something that has completely left out the baptism of Jesus

from the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the faith of the apostles of old, and has corrupted it. I cannot tell you for how long a time it has been corrupted. It does not speak even one verse about the importance of the baptism. So it is literally a religion of the Cross. Since the religion of the Cross has no truth, when people sin, its method of washing away sin is exactly the same as that of worldly religions. It is to offer prayers of repentance.

Worldly religions say that if one practices ascetic training, bows many times, gives many offerings, accumulates much merit, and lives a good life, one's sins disappear and one is born well in the next world. The religion of the Cross is the same. If you and I believe in Jesus, but do not believe in the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, His death, and His resurrection as one, and if we believe that Jesus came to this earth but completely leave out His bearing of our sins by receiving baptism and believe only in the Cross and the resurrection, then because there is no basis for our sins having been passed on to Jesus, there is not a day when the consciences of you and me are without sin.

This is because the death on the Cross happened only once. Jesus' bearing our sins and dying happened exactly once; there is no second time. Let us say that, leaving out the baptism of Jesus, we believed only in the death on the Cross, thinking, "Through that death He loved us; He saved us." Then let us suppose that we committed a sin. Then, because there has been no passing on of the sins of you and me through the baptism, sin still remains in the heart. When that happens, the only way to solve this is to cling to it, saying, "I believe in You. I believe that You shed Your precious blood on the Cross for me and removed my sins." Because they said they were saved by believing in the blood of the Cross, if they then commit a sin, they must again rely on the precious blood of the Cross. But even if they rely on

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it, while it may be sustained for a while if the fact that Jesus saved us on the Cross strikes the heart strongly, since they themselves are so weak that they keep stumbling over certain sins, stumbling several times even in a single day, they cannot keep asking every day for their sins to be remitted.

They do it, but in their own conscience the thought arises, "This isn't it; this isn't it." The Bible says, *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22)*. This means that without Jesus giving up His own life, our sins do not disappear; and for Jesus to give up His life for us, He first had to have our sins passed on to Him. Only by His having our sins passed on to Him in this way and then giving up His life, dying for us, and rising again, can we have, through faith, the new life He has given. If the baptism is left out, this does not work. So, as a result, those who believe in the religion of the Cross offer prayers of repentance and later give up. It turns into mere religion, with them saying, "God, You know." Their hearts ache, but even when they go and ask a religious leader, they are told to offer prayers of repentance every day, so they say, "I tried that, but it didn't work," and in the end they cannot help but rely on Christian doctrine. That doctrine is the doctrine of sanctification. The doctrine of sanctification says that since our hearts or bodies have not become holy all at once even though we believe in Jesus, if we believe in Jesus and offer prayers of repentance every day, by the time we die we will have changed and become clean. Then they have to remain in that doctrine of sanctification and hold on to that doctrine alone. The doctrine of sanctification is the hope and the expectation of those who believe in the religion of the Cross. Our hope lies not in a sanctification that man is to accomplish, but in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Because Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from

John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and He rose again from death and saved us completely.

Faith united with the word, not with doctrine

So here the apostle Paul, speaking of those baptized into Him, those who died with Him, and those who obtained new life with Him, says that you and I must be united with Him by faith. We must unite our hearts and be joined with Him. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. By receiving baptism, He fulfilled all righteousness. He bore all our sins. And as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, He went to the Cross and was nailed to it. At this point, too, we must unite our hearts, joining our hearts by faith, saying, "He received baptism in order to have our sins passed on to Him," and we must also join our hearts by faith to the fact that Jesus bore the sin of the world and said on the Cross that it was all finished. We must be united. Then we must also be united in heart with His having died and risen again. In this way, we become people who believe completely.

This is precisely the faith that believes in Christ. A faith that believes only by doctrine, in which the heart is not involved, is not faith. Even if one knows much doctrine and believes it well, that is not faith. By doctrine, sin does not disappear. If it were only a matter of Christian doctrine, the theologians who teach doctrine every day would have the best faith. But that is merely a letter; there is no life in it. Jesus did not do it that way.

The doctrines of Christianity, too—the doctrine of sanctification, the doctrine of prayers of repentance, and so on—are all doctrines. So those who know much doctrine are correct

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in form. Even when they go to church and pray, the order is set out like this: they give thanks for being kept through the week, they list the sins they committed, saying they are repenting of the sins of the week, and then they pray for the church, for the nation, and for the worship service. All of it is done according to Christian doctrine. So those who believe in doctrine have no vitality, but those who believe by being united with the word of God have vitality because they believed holding on to the word. They have been born again. They have been born anew. So the apostle Paul, after meeting the Lord, said that his old man had died. He said, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*.

That I have been crucified with Christ means that, because my sins were passed on when Jesus received baptism, I also died when Jesus died, and I came to life when Jesus rose again. That is what the faith of the apostle Paul is. The faith of you and me must also become like that. This is the faith of those who are united by faith. We must be united with the word.

So the apostle Paul lived in new life. Paul met the Lord on the road to Damascus. *"'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' Then the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads'" (Acts 9:4–5)*. Only then did he come to know that this One was truly the living God and truly the Savior. The apostle Paul was a man who had thoroughly mastered the law. He was a disciple who had studied under Gamaliel, the foremost scholar of the law at that time. Such an apostle Paul, after coming to know Jesus, came to know very clearly the fact that, just as in the Old Testament a sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering to pass his sins on to it and gave its blood to the priest, and the priest offered the sacrifice for him, so Jesus had our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John

the Baptist. You and I must be the same. The work of salvation that we are to know clearly and believe is also the same. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, not to mention Paul's sins and our sins, passed on to Him once and for all, and after shedding His blood on the Cross and receiving the judgment for those sins in our place, He rose again from death and gave life.

The people of the world, those who believe only in the Cross, cannot rightly interpret this word of Romans chapter 6 even when they look at commentaries. Even if they search through books, it is not there, and even if they ask, no one knows. But does it not appear right here? *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3)*. This is asking whether we who were baptized into Christ Jesus knew that your sins, my sins, and the sins of the apostle Paul were passed on when Jesus received baptism—whether we knew it and believed it, and whether we were united together with Him. Such people were baptized with Jesus, died with Jesus, and rose again with Jesus. It means that they were able to have such faith.

"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ"

So we must be born again of water and the Spirit. When we believe, being united in heart, in what God did for our salvation—that He was born on this earth in human flesh through the body of a woman, received baptism and bore our sins, bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again—we become people born again from sinners into righteous people. So we become children of God

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and people who live in new life. Since we have new life, we now become people who preach new life. In the past, how well one kept the law, how much one meditated on the word, whether one attended early morning prayer without fail, how much one prayed all night, how many times one fasted and prayed, how much one evangelized, and how many good deeds one did became one's own achievements, but after being born again, regardless of all that, one gives oneself only to the work the Lord has done. One does only the work of serving what the Lord has done. If the gospel of the water and the Spirit is spread in this way, one gives oneself, saying, "I will give myself."

"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). The apostle Paul is an amazing man. Long ago, while reading the Bible, I thought there must be some meaning in the fact that in some places it is written "Jesus Christ" and at other times the word "Jesus" is left out and it is written *"as many of you as were baptized into Christ,"* so I looked into it. The word 'Christ' means 'the anointed one.' When a high priest, a prophet, or a king was entrusted with his office, a horn of oil was filled with oil and poured on the head of the one receiving the office. Christ is the High Priest of heaven, and He bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the high priest of the earth. He, the High Priest, did not do it with an earthly sacrificial offering but received baptism on His own body and bore our sins, and bearing the sin of the world, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and on the third day after His death He rose again and saved us; it is when speaking of that work of salvation that He is called Christ. Offering His own body as the sacrificial offering before God the Father, bearing the sins of all people made in the image of God, bearing the sin of the world and going to the Cross, shedding His blood and dying, and rising again from death to save us from

sin—this is the work by which Jesus carried out the office of Christ, and it is the work He did when He came to this earth.

So it says, *"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27)*. It means that one becomes a person without sin, just like Christ. Then what is the baptism that we receive? In the baptism we receive, the form is important too, but within that form there is content. That content is as follows. "Jesus bore my sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River in order to bear my sins. Because I believe that fact, I wish to receive baptism. Jesus bore my sins, went to the Cross, was nailed to it and died, and rose again, and He gave His life to me. I believe that fact. Therefore, I receive baptism in order to make a confession of faith." This is the core content of the baptism we receive. When we receive baptism, we receive it with such a confession of faith, so it is the same as expressing my faith. This faith—believing that Jesus came to this earth for me and for all mankind, received baptism from John the Baptist and bore my sins, went to the Cross, was nailed to it, shed His blood, gave up all His life and died, and rose again to become my Savior, and believing in what He did in order to cause me to be born again, to make me one of God's people, and to make me a person without sin—is precisely the confession of faith with which one receives baptism.

We must receive the baptism of faith into Christ. Satan the devil has hidden the meaning of this baptism, but when our faith comes to know this, the faith in our hearts becomes firm and is made completely new. Fasting and praying, offering prayers of repentance aloud, praising fervently, and shouting hallelujah seem like something plausible while one is doing them, but the moment one leaves the chapel, the heart sinks like a bubble bursting, and one ends up asking, "What did I do? What did I hear?"

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It says, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. By hearing the word of God and holding on to the word of God, by joining the word and our hearts together, through faith we receive the remission of sins, become children of God, become people without sin, and become workers who do the righteous work of God. So the word is extremely important.

A life that manifests Jesus Christ in new life

The Bible cannot be understood when read by those who have not been born again. Even Bible scholars do not understand it when they read it. But when this word is explained and preached to them, those who hear and read it come to believe, joining their hearts to it, saying, "So this is how God saved us; what reason is there for me not to believe?" When they accept it, the Holy Spirit comes upon them, they become children of God and workers of God, and from then on, in our hearts, He causes us to testify of what Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth and how He saved mankind. The Holy Spirit causes us to preach the word on the basis of the word of God, and causes us to testify of the word of God, following the guidance of the Spirit. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all the same one God.

Even now, the reason we live is that, joining our hearts to the baptism Jesus received, we too were baptized with Him; by Jesus being hung on the Cross, we too died with Him; and by Jesus rising again, we too came to life by faith, holding on to the word of God and being united with Him. That is precisely faith. Through faith, we have received the remission of sins, become children of God, and become workers of God. God wants Jesus Christ to be manifested honorably through us. So we do not

preach ourselves, but testify of what Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth, that is, the work by which He saved us by the water and the Spirit. We serve this. Therefore, you and I are workers of the righteousness of God. We are children of God and at the same time workers of God. We do not manifest ourselves, nor do we manifest a person; rather, we always manifest Jesus Christ in our mouths and in our lives. Jesus Christ is manifested through us. The salvation we are to manifest with our mouths and our lives is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We preach the salvation that, because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even the sins we habitually commit, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received that judgment in our place with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death.

In born-again people, Jesus Christ is manifested. He is manifested in their character and also in their words. Our being longsuffering, too, is not because our character is good; it is through the Lord that we endure. If the Lord endures, we also endure, and if the Holy Spirit in my heart says, "This must be set right," then we set it right; it is not because my character is good that we wait so long. There is not a single person of good character on this earth. If touched, everyone explodes.

The apostle Paul is a man who, exactly like us, through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, was baptized into Jesus Christ, died on the Cross with Jesus Christ, and rose again with Jesus Christ. That is what he is preaching now. The apostle Paul says in chapter 6 that since we have now become new creations, we must testify of the Lord and live for Him. Shall we sin as much as we please because we have received the remission of sins? It is that we cannot do so. Nevertheless, you and I are not people who do not sin. I know that well. Then, is it that the Holy

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Spirit made us sin? No, it is not that; it is that we sin habitually. Even those sins the Lord has removed entirely.

If we give ourselves to the work of the Lord, we become instruments of righteousness, but if, though we have received the remission of sins, we say, "I will live as I please," and give ourselves to sin, we become slaves of sin. If we give ourselves as instruments of righteousness, the Lord, loving us, gives us more blessings in order to bear more fruit through us. That is what the Lord says in the parable of the vine. *"Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit" (John 15:2)*. If the vine bears much fruit, the Lord devotes more care to that branch so that it may bear even more. So if we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, if we live united together with the church under the guidance of the word, we can also avoid many hardships.

Preach the gospel to those who accept it

It is the same when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who have just met the Lord burn with zeal and end up preaching even to the point of following after those who do not believe. But if, while preaching, the other person stubbornly refuses, we should wait a little and wait while praying for him; if we press him because he does not believe, we become enemies. We must not make enemies. There is no need to force it on someone who has resolved not to believe.

Even if it is a family member around us, if they have resolved not to believe and glare at us, we must simply wait. We should tell them, "You still have a lot of strength. When things get hard, believe in Jesus. You can go to the kingdom of heaven, and your

sins can disappear. If you want to receive help while living on this earth, it is good to believe in Jesus," and we should pray.

Even with family, if they say they do not want it, we do our best to make them understand and preach to them as much as we can, but if they strongly refuse, we should pray, give them a booklet or the like, and entrust them to God. Jesus said, *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (John 6:44)*. We must pray that God the Father would draw that person into Jesus Christ. And if they refuse to the very end, they go to the place where they are to go. Since all were originally bound for hell, and God saves only some of them, there is no need to grieve too much. Are only our own family members our family? All the people on earth can be the same family, made in the image of God. So let us not try too hard to look after only our own families; if even our own family does not accept it, let us entrust them to God and pray, and let us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who accept it. What we are to preach to those who accept it is the salvation accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and after paying the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, He rose again from death and opened the way of salvation to all the people of the world, not to mention our families. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The person who has died to sin and lives before God

< Romans 6:1–11 >

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Dear beloved saints, the apostle Paul has testified of one thing only, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all the way from Romans chapter 1 through chapter 5. The word of the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit that he preaches was that no one can become a person without sin by his own deeds. If we are to be saved from our sins, we must believe in the Lord as our Savior, Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death. We can be born again through faith that believes in the merit of the baptism of Jesus Christ and of the Cross. And in Romans chapter 5, verse 20, Paul proclaimed as follows: *"Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20)*. This word is truly the word that shows the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit best. But some people even say, "If grace abounds much more where sin abounds, it would be better to commit more sins and receive the grace of God."

Faced with the question of whether we should continue in sin that grace may abound

Concerning such words of misunderstanding, Paul speaks firmly at the very beginning of the word of Romans chapter 6: *"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:1–2)*. Dear fellow believers, this word is not merely an argumentative statement. This word tells us in what state those who have been saved from their sins received their salvation. The heart of the answer Paul gives is contained in this one statement: *"Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:2)*. Paul declares this: *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?"*

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(Romans 6:3). In other words, he declares, "You are people who have already died to sin."

This word is not a matter of resolving, "Let us not sin from now on." It asks how one who believes in the Lord, who has already had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross and was nailed to it, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death, thereby saving sinners once and for all, could go into sin and live in it. It asks how a person who has died to sin could go back again to the place of sin. A person who has died to sin may still face temptation, but is no longer someone who must live under the dominion of sin. Therefore, for a person who has received the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart, there is from the very start no ground for justifying that it is all right to keep on living in sin. This is because a born-again person is one who has died to the sin of the world.

Who are we who were baptized into Christ Jesus?

But to the question of how one who lives with the thoughts of the flesh can be said to have died to sin, Paul asks back as follows: *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3)*.

Dear fellow believers, the most important word here is the expression "into." This word means that we have been made alive again by believing as our Savior in Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and rose again from death. Therefore, it means that we are those who are united with Jesus Christ. In what have we become one with Jesus Christ? The passage

clearly says, *"As many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:3)*. In other words, it says that because Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death, we have become those who are united with Christ.

What does the baptism Jesus Christ received from John mean? It means that Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, was put to death on the Cross, and rose again, and so became our Savior. Therefore, it means that by believing in Jesus Christ we have become those who are united with Him. This is exactly as the word written in Matthew chapter 3, verse 15 of the New Testament says. Jesus said to John the Baptist as follows: *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Here, the *"all righteousness"* that Jesus spoke of means that Jesus bears our sins by receiving baptism from John.

This speaks of the principle of the remission of sins shown in Leviticus chapter 1, verse 4 and chapter 16, verse 21. In the Old Testament age, a sinner received the remission of sins by laying his hands on the head of an unblemished sacrificial offering, thereby passing his sins on to that offering, and by taking its blood and offering it to God. It means that because John passed the sin of the world onto the body of Jesus when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, according to the law of sacrifice in the word of the Old Testament, Jesus was able to be hung on the Cross and put to death in our place, rise again, and become our Savior. Through the baptism Jesus received from John, the sin of the world was passed on to the body of Jesus.

Today, a person who has passed his sins on to the body of Jesus through the baptism Jesus received from John is a person

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who has become one body with Jesus Christ. Therefore, when Christ was nailed to the Cross and died, we, too, died with Christ and are those who are alive again from the tomb. It is exactly as the passage says that we were *"buried with Him" (Romans 6:4)*. Dear fellow believers, this is not merely a figurative word. It is actually being united in one's heart with the baptism Jesus received from John and with His death on the Cross. Such a person has died united with Jesus Christ and has been raised again from death together with the Lord.

And the passage does not stop there but goes straight on to the next point: *"Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4)*. This word says that Christ's resurrection from death was not a matter of Him alone. It means that if we believe in the baptism, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have been united with Jesus Christ and have become one body with Him. The Lord has brought new life to those who are united with Him. We are those who believe in our hearts in the Lord, who has brought us new life. It means that just as the people of Israel who came out of Egypt in the days of old could never go back to Egypt, we, too, as those who have the faith that is united in our hearts with the baptism Jesus received from John and united with the Cross and the resurrection from death, have come to be no longer slaves of sin.

Paul makes clear to us once again that we have become those who are united with Christ in our hearts: *"For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin" (Romans 6:5–6)*.

Now we have become those who do the work of saving new souls through the salvation Jesus Christ has given

Dear fellow believers, if we believe in Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross and put to death, and rose again from death, we are people who have been saved from all our sins. Therefore, we have become those whose hearts live under the rule of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is now doing, through us, the work of saving new souls by spreading the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this earth. The point is, should we, who are such people, become those who serve sin because of the thoughts of our flesh? At times we come under the rule of sin and iniquity because of the thoughts of our flesh. It means that the thoughts of our flesh are ruled by the desires of the flesh, so that we are hindered in the work we want to do of saving souls from sin.

If we live caught between the Spirit and the desires of the flesh, we go through hardship. Therefore, it means that even we who are born again, unless we devote ourselves with all our faith and heart to spreading the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, come to live serving sin. Should we live as slaves of sin while we live in this world? If we have been united with the baptism and death of Jesus Christ and have become instruments of righteousness, from now on we must live as servants of Jesus Christ. We must also be united with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the attitude of one who believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And the passage says that the *"old man"* was crucified with Christ. Here, the old man refers to the old man of our flesh, which served as a slave of sin before we were born again.

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What do the things our old man did in the past point to? The Lord said as follows in Mark chapter 7: *"Out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:21–22)*. In other words, what comes out of the thoughts of the flesh of our old man is sin. What comes out of the thoughts of our flesh is evil thoughts. Before we met the Lord, no matter how hard we tried to escape from them, we could not, but now we believe that the Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. In this way, we have become those who believe in the righteousness of the Lord and have been saved from all sins. Therefore, it means that our hearts have come to be ruled by Jesus Christ, but our flesh has come to be ruled by lust. That is why the apostle Paul confessed, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:24–25)*.

Though the thoughts of our flesh drag us into darkness, we have become those who can give thanks to God through the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ has given. It means that from now on we can live giving thanks to our Lord through faith that believes in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Because we are those who have the faith by which we have been saved from all our sins by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, we have become those who can never go back to the old days. Even if the thoughts of our flesh try to take us back to the old days, they cannot. This is because we are those who have become new creations in Jesus Christ, and so the Holy Spirit is the Master of our hearts and keeps us. Though we could not change our old habits no matter how we

tried, now we have become those who can live for Jesus Christ through faith that believes in the baptism and blood of Jesus Christ.

What does God want from us now? It is that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we should no longer be slaves of sin. Here, the body of sin does not refer merely to the instincts of our physical body. It refers to the entire system of rule by which sin governed people with the power of sin. The fact is that the power of sin can no longer subject us, who live with our hearts united with the Lord, Jesus, who received baptism from John and rose again from death, to the power of sin. It means that in the past we lived as slaves of sin, but now the Holy Spirit is in our hearts and has made us slaves of righteousness.

So Romans chapter 6, verse 7 states the result as follows: *"For he who has died has been freed from sin" (Romans 6:7)*. Dear fellow believers, it means that because we died on the Cross with Jesus Christ and were made alive again, we have obtained the power to live as servants of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Master of the new life given to us once and for all through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection from death.

We have become righteous people over whom sin can no longer have dominion

Paul goes on to ruminate once more on the power of the one who is united with Christ, dying with Him and living with Him: *"Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him" (Romans 6:8–9)*.

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Dear fellow believers, that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and became our Savior through His death on the Cross and His resurrection was the word of eternal truth. Jesus Christ overcame the power of sin and death, rose again from death, and became our Savior. The Lord has become the Master of the new life, who does not let Satan have dominion over us. Just as death can never again have dominion over Christ, He has made it so that sin can never again have dominion over us. And He has caused this fact to be fulfilled also in the people of faith who are together with Jesus Christ. We have become those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that now a person who is in Jesus Christ has become one who has been given the power of faith to overcome the power of sin and death and live together with the Lord.

And verse 10 condenses all this into a single statement: *"For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God" (Romans 6:10)*. Here, we must deeply consider and believe the word that says *"He lives to God" (Romans 6:10)*. Jesus Christ is the Lord, who had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him just once, through the baptism He received from John, and completed our salvation forever through His death on the Cross and His resurrection.

Then what is the work that we, having received the remission of sins, must do in union with the Lord? Jesus Christ, by receiving baptism from John and having the sin of the world transferred to Him, by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and by rising again from death, has enabled us who believe this fact to obtain salvation. Therefore, as those united with Him, we have obtained the qualification to live the life of one who is united with the Lord by faith. We give thanks that He has now made us those who cannot live as slaves of sin.

We must live with the faith that believes we are alive again to God

Now, in Romans chapter 6, verse 11, we reach the conclusion: *"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11)*. We are the people of faith who have obtained new life because the Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was put to death on the Cross, and rose again.

Therefore, we must live believing that we have become those who can triumph over sin by faith. We must acknowledge the fact of the salvation already accomplished through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and live by faith. To a person who has been baptized into Christ Jesus, two facts have already been given. He is one who has already died to sin. Because the old man was crucified and died with Christ, he is no longer a slave of sin. And he is one who is alive again, united together with God in Christ Jesus. This is because the heart united with Christ has brought the life of resurrection. One who believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a person who has a faith that is alive to God. Paul is telling us to live with this faith.

Dear fellow believers, I believe that the word telling us to live by the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given and by the faith that is united with Christ has renewed our faith. Because our old man died united with Christ, we can live by faith united with the Lord. We can live a new life through the faith that is united with Jesus Christ. Therefore, living united with Jesus Christ is our purpose. There are times when our lives lean toward the thoughts of the flesh. But if we live with the faith that is united with Christ, no one can stand in

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our way. Such people are those who can live as slaves of righteousness. Just as in the past we lived bound by the thoughts of the flesh and led by the sin of the world, so now we have become those who can live united with Jesus Christ and have come to be able to give glory to God.

Therefore, the question at the beginning of chapter 6, namely the question *"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1)*, finds its full answer on the basis of the life of faith united with Christ that verse 11 speaks of. One who is united with Christ as one who is dead to sin and alive to God cannot obtain any justification whatsoever for a life that remains in sin. Now, one who lives the life of faith united with Christ is one who lives within the standing of one who has become one of the people of God who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Those who can live the rest of their lives as people united with Jesus Christ

Dear beloved saints, there are words that Romans chapter 6, verses 1 through 11 repeats over and over. They are the words "into," "with," and "united together." These words all point to the same one fact of truth. It is the fact that we have become one body with Christ and must live for one purpose. Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, has become our Savior and our shepherd. Our old man was crucified and died with Christ, the body of sin was done away with, and the power of death can no longer have dominion over us who are united with Christ. We have become those who are dead to our sins and alive to God.

Then it has now become clear how we must live the rest of our lives. We have become those who can live by faith that believes in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And we have become those who can live united by faith through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John the Baptist and His death. Therefore, we must not go on clinging to the thoughts of the flesh and the sins of the old man, but must live a life of walking by faith in new life as those united with Christ.

Paul became one who was united with Christ through the baptism Jesus received from John. One who has the faith united with Christ preaches all his life long the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given, and then returns to the Lord when the Lord permits. If we are the bride of Christ, it is right for us to live with our hearts united with Jesus Christ, our spiritual Bridegroom. This will be the most important goal in our lives. It is not my plans going one way and the Lord's will another; living with my heart united with the Lord's will is precisely what becomes the life of the righteous.

Dear fellow believers, the sin of this world can no longer have dominion over the heart of the righteous. In the past, when we sinned because of our shortcomings, sin crushed us, shut us up in a sense of guilt, and tormented us. But now sin cannot do that. This is because sin is not our master. It is because the Lord has caused us to be born again completely through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, I hope that we will not follow the thoughts of our flesh, but will renew our hearts through faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live with the faith that believes by faith that we are dead to sin and alive to God. This is the blessed message that Romans chapter 6, verses 1 through 11 conveys to us. I hope that all of us, as those united with the baptism of Christ, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection, will live the rest of

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our lives as slaves of the righteousness of God and then meet the Lord. Hallelujah! ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The new life obtained by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Romans 6:1–23 >

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans chapter 6 is a word that presents the answer to what has now changed for a person who has obtained the eternal remission of sins by believing in his heart in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If Romans chapter 5 declared the change of

status, chapter 6 explains how that change of faith has changed the governing structure of the life of faith. The core of this chapter does not lie in teaching how to sin less; rather, since the rule of sin has already ended, it focuses on believing this fact and on how to live the life of faith.

Paul raises the question of whether, if we have received the grace of salvation from God and have been saved from all the sins of the world, we shall from now on *"continue in sin" (Romans 6:1)*, and he says firmly, *"Certainly not!" (Romans 6:2)*. He is asking how we who died to sin can go into that sin and live in it.

Next, Paul explains the work of the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist. Here, the work of the baptism Jesus received from John speaks of the way in which the sin of mankind was transferred onto the body of Jesus. The baptism Jesus Christ received from John points to the event of salvation in which Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death, and thereby delivered those who believe in Jesus from the sin of the world. Therefore, our old man was crucified with Jesus so that we who were under the power of sin might die together with Him, and now we have come to live as a new creation that walks in new life, united with Christ, who rose from the dead. This is none other than the declaration that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and brought the judgment for that sin to an end on the Cross.

Paul tells us to take part in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and in the Cross.

Paul says that when we accept by faith the truth that our old man died with Jesus on the Cross and that we have been raised

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again together with Him, we, as those who have obtained new life, come to be used as instruments of righteousness.

Therefore, Paul demands a reckoning of faith. The word *"reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11)* does not mean that we should brainwash ourselves. It means that we should acknowledge the fact of salvation that has already taken place as the righteousness of God, and live accepting that objective fact by faith. Our feelings may waver at times and may change according to circumstances, but the spiritual life is to live by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for that sin in our place on the Cross. True faith is to live by faith, taking the verdict of the word of God as the standard.

Now Paul tells us not to let sin reign in our mortal body. The important point is the fact that sin has already lost its right to be king. The problem, however, lies in the fact that we, through the delusion of unbelief, seat sin again on the throne of our hearts. The word that we are not under the law but under grace is the declaration that all our sins have come to an end.

The apostle Paul throws out a question once more. The answer to the question of whether we may sin because we are under grace is still that we may not. This is because man is a being who always lives as someone's slave. A slave *"of sin" (Romans 6:16)* comes to death, and a slave *"of obedience" (Romans 6:16)* comes to righteousness. There is no such thing as neutrality. Now those who are in Christ Jesus must know the fact that their master has changed.

Finally, Paul speaks by contrasting "what is received in return" with "a gift received freely." That is, he says, *"The*

wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Sin is a system in which one receives as much as one has worked, whereas the grace of God means what we receive by faith even though we have not worked. Eternal life is not a reward but the gift of salvation that has already been given.

In the end, Romans chapter 6 teaches us that since we who are born again have already died to all the sins and offenses we inherited from Adam, from now on the power of sin has been nullified for us, and the one who rules over us has changed from the law to the grace of God. The fight of the saints is not a fight to overcome sin, but a fight in which we must accept by faith the fact that all sins have already come to an end and live a life that bears the fruit of the Spirit. Our righteous life is not a condition of salvation but becomes the life of those who have been saved from sin. Therefore, Romans chapter 6 does not ask how well we are living, but asks under whose rule we are living now. This is the order of the saved life of which Romans chapter 6 testifies.

The meaning of the faith united with the baptism Jesus received from John and with His death on the Cross and resurrection

The union spoken of in Paul's expression *"baptized into Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:3)* does not mean an emotional experience or an inner uplift. It means that I have taken part by faith in the event in which my sin was actually moved to Jesus Christ through the baptism He received from John, that is, the event of the passing on of sins. The starting point of this union is the work of the baptism Jesus received from John.

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In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, there was the procedure of the laying on of hands, in which the sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed his sins on to it. The word of the New Testament tells us the fact that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John (Matthew 3:13–17), and by receiving the judgment for that sin in our place on the Cross, He saved us who believe from all the sins of the world (John 19:17–30). This baptism Jesus received from John was not a mere symbol of humility, but an event that became the fulfillment of prophecy, in which the sin of the world was actually transferred onto the body of Jesus. Therefore, the word *"as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:3)* means that we must become those who no longer bear their own sins themselves, but who accept by faith that those sins have already been transferred onto the body of Jesus Christ. It means that we must receive the washing of sins in our hearts through faith that believes the word of salvation revealed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and become people of faith.

Paul, speaking of the fact that we have received the washing of sins in our hearts through faith that believes in the work of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, asks, *"Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3)*. If our sins, the sin of the world, were transferred onto the body of Jesus once and for all and moved to Him, then because the righteousness of God had to carry out the judgment for that sin, Jesus was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and rose again from death. We must know that the sin of the world was transferred onto His body through the baptism Jesus received from John, and we must know the fact that He has already paid for the judgment for that

sin with the blood of the Cross and so saved us from sin and judgment.

The Cross is not a vague expression of love, but the place where the judgment for sin was precisely executed on the sin of the world that had already been transferred to Jesus through the baptism He received from John. Therefore, the word *"we were buried with Him through baptism into death" (Romans 6:4)* confirms that we are those who died together with Him through faith that believes in Jesus as the Savior and who have taken part in His resurrection. This word testifies that all our sins were transferred to Jesus through the baptism He received from John, that Jesus was nailed to the Cross and finished the judgment for those sins, and that those sins came to a complete end through His death and resurrection. The fact that those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit have been united with the death of Jesus shows that we no longer have to pay the price of our sins ourselves. This is because the judgment for sin has already been executed in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and on the Cross.

Paul does not stop here but says that we were buried together with Jesus Christ. Having been buried means that, beyond the verdict on sin having been handed down, we have crossed with Jesus Christ the river of death from which there is no returning. This word declares that God's salvation is not a temporary remedy, but that He has ended our problem of sin completely and forever. Because the sin of the world was transferred onto His body through the baptism Jesus received from John, and the judgment for our sins was paid in full by the price of the blood of Jesus, who was nailed to the Cross, from now on we are no longer in the status of sinners but have come into the status of saved saints. That is why our old status was buried on the Cross together with Jesus Christ.

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Romans chapter 6 says that since the whole price of sin has been paid in full, we now cannot become sinners in status even if we wanted to. Although we have lived as sinners until now, we died with Jesus on the Cross, that status of sinner was buried once and for all and brought to an end, and we have now come into the status of the righteous, so that we are able to live the life of the righteous by believing in the righteousness of God.

And Paul speaks of the meaning of the resurrection as follows. The resurrection is not a mere miracle but the fruit of the remission of sins, and it is God's public declaration that the judgment for all sins has ended. If sin had remained in our hearts, it would have been impossible for us to take part in His resurrection. But because the judgment for sin ended by the price of the blood of Jesus, who was nailed to the Cross, a life that passes from death to resurrection became possible. Therefore, just as the word says that *"we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4)*, we have become those who have already obtained new life by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Salvation from all sins and resurrection from death are not made by our resolve or effort, but are the blessing accomplished by the power of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which reveals the righteousness of God.

This means that the status of sinner has ended and that the relationship with God has been restored, and it means that we have now become *"a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17)*. The expression 'born again' indicates that the position of our existence has been newly moved. Because our sins, the sin of the world, were transferred onto His body through the baptism Jesus received from John, the judgment for sin was paid in full by the blood of the Cross, and He rose again from death, those who believe this are no longer shut up under sin but have become a

new creation that has obtained new life together with the Lord and lives anew.

In the whole process of receiving this remission of sins, the role of the Holy Spirit is also clear. The Holy Spirit is not One who came to make salvation anew every time I waver. The Holy Spirit is the One who testifies in my heart of the salvation already completed by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and so makes me live with assurance. That is why the Holy Spirit is called the Helper. Therefore, union with Jesus means that the Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts that the sin of the world was transferred through the baptism Jesus received from John, that the judgment for sin was executed by the blood of the Cross, and that salvation was completed and confirmed through His death and resurrection.

In the end, if the union with Jesus Christ of which Romans chapter 6 speaks is put in one sentence, it is as follows. Through the baptism Jesus received from John, all my sins, the sin of the world, were transferred onto His body; those transferred sins were judged by the blood of the Cross and brought to an end; and as a result, we who were sinners were buried with Him, rose again from death, and have now been moved into new life. This is the word of life that Paul spoke of: being baptized into His death, being buried with Him, and rising again with Him.

Only those who have received the remission of sins can live the righteous life God wants

Looking at the flow of the word of the Book of Romans, we come to know that the life after the remission of sins is not an effort to maintain salvation, but a new life lived for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in a way befitting the

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status of the saved that has already been given. What is required of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the precious blood of Jesus, who Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for that sin in our place on the Cross, is a life lived by believing the fact that they have become a new creation. It means that from now on the perspective of life has changed. Paul says that this change of faith leads to the life of the born-again and in the end becomes a life of faith that expands into the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The reason faith keeps wavering even after one has received the remission of sins is that one still places the standard of life on one's own emotional state. When we evaluate ourselves by the standard of how our feelings are, how well we have lived before God today, or what mistakes there were, faith cannot but become unstable. The Book of Romans clearly moves the standard of life for the born-again. That standard must be placed not on today's condition but on the verdict of faith that we have already received the remission of sins in Jesus Christ.

"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11). This word of the apostle Paul is not an attitude of persuading or hypnotizing oneself. Rather, it means that we should accept by faith the work of that baptism Jesus has already received from John. A righteous life is not the result of striving to become righteous, but the fruit of salvation that appears naturally because we have already become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When this faith takes root, the direction of life also changes. Paul says, *"Do not let sin reign in your mortal body" (Romans 6:12)*. The right of sin to rule has already been stripped away, and all that remains is only the life of the victory of faith. The

word *"not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14)*, spoken to us who have been born again out of sin, does not mean neglect or a loose life. It means that the sovereign who has jurisdiction over us has changed. When we believe this fact, our lives are changed not into lives of fear, but into lives of obedience to God with thanksgiving.

Paul goes on to speak of a very concrete dedication. He mentions not only the heart or the mind, but the body and its members. His exhortation is, *"Do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin" (Romans 6:13)*, but present them only to God so that they may be used *"as instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13)*. A righteous life is not an abstract resolve but a change in actual use. The same mouth that once spoke words of condemnation becomes a mouth that testifies of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the same hands that once displayed one's own righteousness become instruments of service, and the same feet that once headed in a self-centered direction become feet sent out by the gospel. To present one's body is not an effort to maintain holy feelings, but to present to God the body that has already become righteous and so to become an instrument that serves the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which reveals the righteousness of God.

It is in the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that this being an instrument of righteousness is revealed most clearly. Romans chapter 12 gives the exhortation, *"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1)*, and this is an invitation to give ourselves over to testifying of the righteousness of salvation that God has accomplished. The spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a matter of piling up achievements, but of becoming a channel through which the righteousness of salvation flows out to the world.

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When preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the saints do not put forward their own righteousness but proclaim the righteousness of God. That is why this work can be continued only by those who are under the grace of God.

For this life to continue, faith that rightly knows the role of the Holy Spirit is needed. The Holy Spirit is the One who testifies in our hearts of the righteousness of God that has already been completed. The work of the Holy Spirit lies in testifying of the assurance of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit makes us take not fear but thanksgiving as our driving force. On this faith, life becomes not a duty but a joy.

In the end, the life after the remission of sins leads in the direction of standing on the firm promise of the word of God and living under the rule of the grace of God. And that life appears in the form of entrusting body and heart to God, and takes concrete shape as *"instruments of righteousness" (Romans 6:13)* that testify of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The continuation of this whole process comes from faith that trusts the testimony of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the life of the saints is not a life lived in order to become righteous, but a life in which, having already become righteous, they present their bodies to God as instruments of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in which God delights. This is the righteous life after the remission of sins that the Book of Romans teaches.

Those who have received the remission of sins are used as instruments of righteousness in the Church of God

Then what kind of place is truly the Church of God? Is a church where people gather believing only in the blood of the

Cross the Church of God? Or is the gathering of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received the judgment for that sin in our place on the Cross, the Church of God?

This question is the essential question of whether we will evaluate a church by people, tradition, or size, or discern it by the content of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When the logic the apostle Paul developed in the Book of Romans and the Book of Ephesians is seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the identity of the church stands on a very clear standard of the word of God.

The Church of God spoken of in the Bible is not a building or an institution, but the community of those who have been called by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The apostle Paul defines the Church of God as *"those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2)*. The key here lies not in who has gathered, but in what gospel they believed to become saints. The identity of the church is defined by whether those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have gathered. In other words, a church is discerned not by its outward form but by whether its people are those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Church of God must be a community in which the instruments of righteousness actually function. Paul tells the saints who have been saved from sin to present their bodies to God and use them as instruments for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But this word has a clear premise. That is, only when it is a church where the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that the remission of sins has already been completed, is proclaimed can the saints become not those who

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manage their guilt, but those who can serve the spread of the gospel with the assurance of salvation by believing in the word of God. The church must be a community of the righteous. If a place called a church keeps binding its members in the state of being sinners, they can never become the light of the world.

The structure of the gospel preached by churches that emphasize only the blood of the Cross generally takes the form in which sin remains in the heart, the remission of sins must be received repeatedly, and the saints always remain in the position of sinners who are in the midst of repentance. In such a structure, the saints come to be moved by fear rather than by the assurance of salvation, service drifts into duty rather than an expression of thanksgiving, and the work of the church easily becomes a system that maintains a religious life rather than the fruit of righteousness. In such an environment, it is hard for the assurance that one is already righteous to come naturally, and the saints end up remaining not as instruments of righteousness but as objects of their own sin management.

On the contrary, a community that believes in the Lord, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment for that sin in our place by the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death, has the character of the Church of God. Within this gospel of the water and the Spirit, all the sin of mankind was transferred to Jesus through the baptism He received from John, the judgment for that sin was completed on the Cross, and the saints, as those who have received the remission of sins, are able to become members of God's community and serve. When this gospel of the water and the Spirit is at the center of the church, the saints come to stand in a rightful place to serve in the church as those who have the assurance of salvation rather than guilt. In such a community, the saints live as those who testify by faith

of the righteousness of God that has already been completed and so set souls free from the sin of the world.

Therefore, the standard for judging whether a community is the Church of God is clear. It is not because many people gather, nor because its history and tradition are long, nor because its zeal and activities are great. The Church of God is a community that knows exactly how the righteousness of God was completed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and proclaims it by faith, that acknowledges the saints as righteous, and that, on that faith, has the saints present themselves as instruments of righteousness. The Church of God is not a community that speaks only of the blood of the Cross and leaves the remission of sins incomplete, but a community gathered of those who believe that the remission of sins has already been completed through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

In the end, the righteous life that has become an instrument of the Holy Spirit is not a life that is equally possible in any community. That life naturally comes to do the flower-calyx work in the place where the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit is proclaimed, in the community where one is acknowledged as righteous, and in the church where one can present oneself as an instrument able to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why the Church of God is not a gathering that keeps washing its own sins, but a place that gathers in order to testify of the sin of the world that has already been washed away. The place where this *"congregation of the righteous" (Psalm 1:5)* gathers—that very place is the Church of God.

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Why we cannot remain in sin even though we have received grace, and the meaning of having "died to sin"

The beginning of Romans chapter 6 is Paul's strong rebuttal against the possibility that the word "*where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Romans 5:20)* proclaimed earlier in chapter 5 might be misunderstood or abused. When this passage is explained from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can clearly understand why we have become beings that can never coexist with sin, that is, the fact that our status has been completely changed from sinner to righteous, from slave of sin to child of God.

The reason Paul rebutted so firmly is that the purpose of salvation lies not merely in escaping punishment, but in our being joined as one with Jesus Christ, taking part together in His death and resurrection, and so having our very status fundamentally changed. If salvation stopped at the level of merely being exempted from punishment, the sophistry "Let us remain in sin so that grace may abound" would have been possible. But the gospel of the water and the Spirit brings a change of a far deeper dimension than that.

Paul also points out that such a claim directly distorts the essence of the grace of God. The grace of God is never an indulgence for licentiousness, given to allow us to sin all the more freely. Rather, it is the compelling love that paid a price to buy us, who were serving as slaves of sin, and moved us over to be children of righteousness.

When this is seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the reason becomes even clearer. We have become righteous because Jesus Himself had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, that is,

through the water, and was judged in our place by the blood of the Cross. To say, “Let us sin more for the sake of grace,” while knowing that this enormous price has been paid, is an act that insults once again Christ, who died for me, and so it can never be tolerated.

The meaning of having died to sin

Paul here clearly defines the relationship between the saints and sin with the word ‘died.’ This does not refer merely to a subjective feeling or a psychological state, but is a clear fact that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has accomplished, that is, a fact actually acknowledged as such before God. Above all, this means that our old status as sinners has completely ended. Just as the law of a nation can no longer charge a dead person with his former crimes, when we were united with Jesus Christ, our old man, that is, our former selves that used to sin, was already dealt with as having been judged and put to death. Just as the same charge cannot be brought again against one whose execution has been carried out, the judgment for our sins is in the state of having already ended in Jesus.

When we look, from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, at how this union was established, first, all our sins were transferred when Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River. By this, our very fate as sinners was bound together as one with Jesus. And when Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross, it was not that He alone died by Himself, but our body of sin also received the punishment and died together with Him.

Therefore, in faith we are already beings for whom the execution of the death sentence for sin has been completed. Just

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as one who has once died cannot come back to life and be ruled by sin, so the righteous who have died to sin are also no longer in a status in which they can serve as slaves of sin.

The beginning of a new life

This declaration of having "died to sin" does not mean that our very ability to sin has completely disappeared. Rather, it means that the right of sin to rule over us has disappeared. While the flesh remains on this earth, the temptation of sin may still come, but the ground on which that temptation can rule over us is in a state of having already been completely extinguished.

The saints born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit have now come to live in a new life that has nothing whatever to do with sin. Within us the Holy Spirit, who is holy, Himself dwells, and a new nature that seeks to follow the righteousness of God has been planted. Therefore, Paul's answer *"Certainly not!" (Romans 6:2)* is, before being a moral warning, a solemn confirmation of our status.

The spiritual meaning of being baptized into Christ

Verses 3 through 5 of Romans chapter 6 are a very important passage that explains how we have become completely one with Jesus Christ spiritually. Paul here unfolds its meaning through the word 'baptism.' When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, its meaning is revealed even more vividly.

The baptism spoken of here does not mean a religious rite of simply immersing the body in water; it means that the work of redemption of Jesus Christ, namely the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection, has become the foundation of my faith.

When this is explained from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it means that at the very moment Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River, all the sin of mankind was transferred onto the body of Jesus. In other words, to believe in the baptism Jesus received from John is to acknowledge by faith the fact of the truth that when He received baptism from John, my sin, too, was transferred to Him.

At the moment I believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, I come to be united with Christ. In other words, union with Christ refers to the spiritual state in which I, believing that my sin, too, passed on to the body of Jesus when He had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, became one who received the judgment for sin together with Him when He received the judgment for sin.

Becoming united by the same faith with the baptism He received and His death on the Cross

The event in which Jesus, who had all the sins of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood speaks of the fact that we were united with Jesus Christ and died together with Him. This speaks of the event in which my old life as a sinner was officially brought to an end through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and His death on the Cross.

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The Bible clearly proclaims that *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. It tells us that according to this law of righteousness, Jesus, who bore our sins once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again from death, and so became our Savior. But this death of Jesus was not the martyr's death of a saint; it was the event in which He had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and paid the price of sin just once on the Cross.

Therefore, when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts, God tells us that our old man, that is, our sinful self, already died with Jesus on the Cross, and that we were able to rise again from death together with Him. It means that through this righteous verdict we were able to escape completely from all the debt and punishment for sin.

The baptism, death, and resurrection of Jesus have brought us new life

The death of Jesus Christ on the Cross never speaks of failure. When Jesus rose again three days after He died, we, who are united with the baptism He received from John and with His death and resurrection, also came to obtain new life together with Him.

The resurrection of Jesus has a meaning beyond a mere miracle. It is the proclamation of victory and the public verdict that announced before the whole universe the fact that our sins have been perfectly washed away. If Jesus had not risen again from death, our salvation, too, could not be guaranteed.

When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, just as Jesus rose from the dead, we, too,

have now become those whose body of sin, that is, the old man, has been buried, and who have been born again as a new creation clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, that is, as the righteous. We are now no longer slaves of sin but, as those who have the life of God, have become beings alive to God.

The great assurance that union gives us

Since my sin passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John, it is a union of death; and since His righteousness came into me through the resurrection of Jesus, it is a union of life. The reason Paul asks repeatedly, *"Do you not know" (Romans 6:3)*, is that only when we clearly realize the meaning of this very union can we actually overcome the temptation of sin.

If I still regard myself as a sinner, I can never overcome sin. But when we come to believe clearly in the fact that my old man has already died through the baptism Jesus received from John and His death on the Cross, and that I am now living in the status of a righteous person together with the risen Jesus, we become those who can fully overcome sin.

What we have gained as the result of the old man being crucified with Christ

Verses 6 and 7 of Romans chapter 6 are a passage that clearly teaches where the roots of the faith of the saints living today must be planted. Paul here declares the legal victory we have already won, and when this is explained from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, how perfect the content of

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that victory is becomes all the more vivid. What we have gained as the result of the old man being crucified with Christ can be summed up broadly in three things.

The body of sin done away with, that is, the power of sin destroyed

Here, the words ‘done away with’ do not mean that its very existence has completely disappeared, but carry the meaning that its power has been neutralized so that it can no longer take effect.

As for how our old man, that is, the sinful self that inherited the nature of Adam, could be crucified, it is because when Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River, He had all our sins fully transferred onto His own body. When Jesus, who had our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, our body of sin, united with Him, was also executed together with Him.

As a result, sin has now lost every legal ground on which it could rule over us. The very root has already been cut off so that the power of sin cannot take effect within us. Sin can still raise the voice of temptation around us, but its right to drag us away by force has already been taken away.

No longer being slaves of sin, that is, being set free in status

Before, even though we did not want to sin, we were in the place of slaves of sin who could not help being dragged around by the nature of sin. But now our very status has been fundamentally reversed.

If we look at the laws of the ancient world, a slave could obtain freedom only when his master died or he himself died. By this same principle, Jesus, by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross in our place, paid off all our debt owed to the master called sin once and for all.

As a result, we have now become those who have the authority to boldly refuse the commands of sin. Even when sin stretches out its hand of temptation again, we have become able to declare boldly, "You are no longer my master, for my old man has already died on the Cross."

Being delivered from sin and justified, that is, the legal declaration of innocence

The word recorded in verse 7 that "*he that hath died is justified from sin –ASV" (Romans 6:7)* contains a very clear truth. It is the same principle as that a prisoner whose death sentence has already been carried out can never again be charged with that crime.

When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God looks upon us who believe with our hearts in the work Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and He gives us this verdict. That is, He declares, "Your old man has already been judged and died together with Jesus, so you are now one who has nothing whatever to do with sin."

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Conclusion

Because my sin passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John and my old man died through His death on the Cross, I am now no longer a slave of sin but a righteous child of God. By beginning verse 6 with *"knowing this" (Romans 6:6)*, Paul is emphasizing the point that knowing this fact for certain is in itself important.

In my feelings I may still feel like a sinner, but before God the judgment for sin has already ended, and the state of having risen again as the righteous is what we truly are. Therefore, the true freedom we must enjoy today in the gospel of the water and the Spirit begins from faith that firmly believes in this fact of salvation that God has already accomplished.

The change of status—from slaves of sin to slaves of righteousness

Verses 12 through 18 of Romans chapter 6 are a passage that teaches how the righteous, born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must live in actual life in a way befitting their changed status. Paul here explains the life of the saints with the very practical analogy of serving a master.

Paul first clearly defines what kind of beings we were in the past and what kind of beings we have now become.

Originally, we were slaves of sin. All human beings born as descendants of Adam were those who were ruled by the nature of sin and were used as instruments of sin just as Satan directed. But since God passed our sins on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John, that is, through the water, and had Him receive the judgment for those sins through the blood of the

Cross, we have now become those who have been completely set free from the master called sin.

And now our new master is no longer sin but righteousness, that is, God Himself. At the very moment we became righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we were delivered from the power of sin and became those who belong wholly to God.

Obeying from the heart—following the form of the gospel

The life of the saints is never a life of keeping the law by compulsion. Paul here expresses that we have obeyed from the heart the *"form of doctrine" (Romans 6:17)*, that is, the set frame of teaching.

When God made us righteous, He did not merely declare it with a single word, but Himself prepared the clear and sure way of salvation, namely baptism and blood. That is, accepting with the heart this clear fact of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus had all my sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and died on the Cross in my place, is the beginning of true obedience.

Only when there is first this obedience of the heart to the gospel of the water and the Spirit does the inner driving force to present the members of our bodies to God as instruments of righteousness naturally arise.

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To whom we present ourselves—the saints' choice and the direction of life

Paul teaches that the choice we make about whom we give over our members to—that is, each part of the body, such as the eyes, mouth, hands, and feet—reveals whose slaves we are actually living as.

First, we can give over our members as instruments of unrighteousness. When, even though we have already become righteous, we still live according to the lusts of the flesh, our bodies come to be used as evil tools that sin uses. This never means that salvation itself is lost, but it cannot but be a pitiable thing, because it is living a life shameful before God even while having the status of the righteous.

On the other hand, we can also give over our members as instruments of righteousness. When we give our whole lives over to God with the clear identity that "I am a righteous person born again of water and the Spirit," God Himself uses us as weapons of righteousness that preach truth and life.

The holy responsibility of the saved

Our status was changed once and for all by faith, but our posture in life gradually takes concrete shape through the choice of presenting ourselves to God while relying daily on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This word gives two important lessons to the saints living today.

The first is assurance. We are those who have already been saved from sin and made free. Sin can no longer rule over us by force. The second is dedication. Therefore, we must now no longer lend our ears to the temptation of sin, but gladly and

willingly give over our time and our bodies for the glory of God, who has made us righteous. This very choice of to whom we are presenting our lips, hands, and feet today is the important process by which we confirm in our lives our identity as those who have become slaves of righteousness.

Death is the wages that sin pays, and eternal life is the gift that God gives freely

Romans 6:23 is a great word that is the summary of the whole Bible and contrasts with utmost clarity the two destinies mankind faces. When this is explained from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the legal basis for why we must not rely on our own deeds but hold on only to the gift of God is revealed all the more clearly.

Paul here explains the nature of salvation using two words that contrast with each other.

First, looking at the expression *"the wages of sin" (Romans 6:23)*, wages mean the rightful pay one deserves to receive for the work one has done. For man to live according to the nature of sin and to sin is like performing work as a slave of sin. The salary received as the result is none other than death. This death is never a punishment that God inflicts without cause; it is the rightful payment for the seeds of sin that man himself has sown.

On the other hand, the expression *"the gift of God" (Romans 6:23)*, that is, a gift, has an entirely different nature. A gift is something given freely, without cost, to one who has no qualification at all to receive it. Eternal life is never a bonus we have earned by our effort, but a pure gift that God gives freely in Christ Jesus.

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Comparing these two, if eternal life had the nature of wages, not a single one of us could have received and enjoyed that eternal life. Conversely, if death had the nature of a gift, one could simply refuse it; but death is so fearful because it is the rightful result, that is, the wages, that a man who has sinned must inevitably receive.

The basis of death—man's offenses and the judgment of the law

Then where are the roots of this destiny called death laid? When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the answer becomes clear. Since Adam, all human beings have been born sinners and live in sin. And the law points out this sin exactly and solemnly pronounces, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*.

All the religious acts by which man strives to somehow wash away his sins with his own strength only prove more certainly the fact that he is a sinner, and their end, without exception, leads to the punishment of eternal hell, that is, death. Therefore, the basis of death lies precisely in unresolved sin itself.

The basis of eternal life—the righteousness of the water and the Spirit accomplished by Jesus Christ

On the other hand, eternal life exists only in Christ Jesus our Lord. In order to give us this eternal life as a gift, God gave us the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

First, in the stage of the water, that is, baptism, at the very moment Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River,

all the sins that are the cause of the wages of sin we had to receive, namely death, were fully transferred to Jesus. And in the stage of the blood, that is, the Cross, Jesus, who bore our sins in our place, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and so paid in our place the wages called death that we rightly had to pay.

Because the price of our sins was completely settled by Jesus receiving baptism from John and dying on the Cross, for us who believe in Him there no longer remains any wages of sin to be charged. Rather, God freely places in our arms, together with the resurrection of Jesus, the amazing gift called eternal life.

Conclusion

Death is the perfectly natural result of the sins I have committed, but eternal life is a far too undeserved gift that comes from the work Jesus has accomplished through the water and the Spirit. This word demands of us today one firm decision.

Those who rely on their own deeds and try to pile up their own righteousness can only end up at death, the wages of sin. But those who honestly acknowledge their own inability and accept with their hearts the gift of God that Jesus has completed through the water and the Spirit come to enjoy eternal life abundantly. It will be a matter of utmost importance to look back on whether we are now living as slaves of sin, or whether we are enjoying with thanksgiving the gift of eternal life given freely in Jesus Christ. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Since you are under grace, present your bodies to God

< Romans 6:12–14 >

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

Do not give yourself over to the desires of the body

There are times when, even though we have the heart to serve the Lord, when it actually comes to moving our bodies, we look first for what is comfortable for ourselves. And afterward, looking at our own inadequacy, we sometimes hesitate, wondering whether we can step forward for the Lord’s work. To us who follow the desires of the body or who draw back, weighed down by our own faults, Paul says that sin does not have dominion over us and exhorts us to present ourselves to God. Where does the strength to follow this exhortation come from?

It says, *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” (Romans 6:12)*. Paul did not tell us to first overcome sin and then become the Lord’s people.

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Because he had said just before this, *"Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11)*, he is now telling us, who have died to sin and are alive to God, not to go after the lusts of the body. We have become those who are dead to sin because Jesus received baptism from John, had our sins passed on to Him, and paid the price for them by shedding His blood on the Cross. And we have become those who are alive to God because the Lord rose again from death. In this way, the fact that we have received the remission of sins comes first, and the exhortation as to where we should present our bodies follows after it.

That does not mean, however, that the desires of the flesh disappear after we are saved. The desire to insist on our own thinking to the end, or the desire to put our own interests ahead of other people's circumstances, still arises, and the heart that pities itself, using its own weakness as an excuse, is also one form of selfish desire. If we simply give our bodies over every time such a thought rises up, it becomes a life that loves our own desires more than the life the Lord has given. Therefore, we must not regard a desire as something we naturally have to follow just because it has arisen, but must examine before the word whether that thought is right.

The fact itself that we have bodies and have things we need for living is not wrong. But if we do not stop at seeking what we need, and think that as long as we ourselves are satisfied it does not matter what happens to others, that heart goes against the Lord's will. Paul's exhortation is not telling us to hate the body, but telling us not to put the lusts of the body ahead of the will of the Lord, who saved us.

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The use of the members that once served sin

Paul went on to say, *"And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin" (Romans 6:13)*. Here, the members refer to our bodies, and instruments means weapons, that is, tools that someone uses. If we devote our strength only to slandering others with our mouths and to filling our own cravings with our hands, we are giving that body over to sin as a weapon of unrighteousness. Here is the reason why we cannot think that, having received the remission of sins, it is all right to do anything with our bodies.

Depending on where we present our bodies, our hearts follow there as well. If we say we believe in the Lord in our hearts yet keep giving our bodies over only to our own desires, following those desires becomes more and more familiar, and our hearts become steeped in them too. Conversely, if we place our bodies where the word is heard and actually take on the work of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, our bodies, too, learn a life of being used for what is right, and our hearts also come to dwell on that work. Even things we could not do while we only had the intention in our hearts and did not move our bodies, we can learn by taking on small tasks first together with the church.

Such practice is not a way of washing away sin. Jesus has already washed away our sins by having them passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and by paying the price for them by shedding His blood on the Cross. Therefore, it is not that more sin is removed because we have presented our bodies much, nor that we become more righteous people because we have done more work than others. It is that, because the salvation we have already received from the Lord is precious, we want the use of our bodies also to be fitting for that salvation. Therefore, rather than increasing our work in order to boast of

ourselves, we must first look back on what we are giving our bodies over to right now.

Present to God the body of one who is alive again

It says, *"But present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God" (Romans 6:13)*. Paul does not speak only of what we must not do, but tells us to present our saved bodies to God. Since the Lord has made us, who were in sin, alive, it means that we can now serve the Lord's righteous work with those bodies.

What is the work by which He made us alive? By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had the sin of the world, including the sins we commit throughout our lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all. The Lord, who bore that sin, received in our place the judgment for sin that we were to receive by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and by rising again from death He remitted our sins and gave us new life. By believing in this salvation that Jesus accomplished, we have been delivered from sin and have come to live before God. It is not that we became better people by our own strength and produced new life.

Therefore, presenting our bodies to God is not a matter of trying to obtain a qualification we do not have, but a matter of a person whom the Lord has made alive giving himself up in gratitude for that grace. We may take on together the work needed for preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or we may help with unnoticed tasks, preparing the place where the word is heard. Offering material goods to the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit or to mission work is also using what we have earned by laboring with our bodies for the Lord's work. The purpose of all this service lies not in exalting our own

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names, but in letting others also hear of the remission of sins that the Lord has accomplished.

Since one person cannot take on all the work, we must serve together while looking after one another's circumstances. A person whose body is weak and who cannot move as much as others is not someone who has nothing at all to present to God. When we discuss together what we can do, seek the Lord's help, and present ourselves, the heart that wants to serve the Lord takes root in our daily lives as well.

Because we are under grace, sin does not have dominion over us

It says, *"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14)*. This promise does not mean that our will has grown strong and so we will never do wrong from now on. It means that because Jesus has saved us, who were trying to become righteous by our own deeds before the law that exposes sin, we no longer remain under sin, which condemned us as sinners. The ground on which sin does not have dominion over us lies not so much in our firm resolve as in the remission of sins that the Lord has fully accomplished.

We must not take the statement that we are not under law to mean that it is now right to do evil. It means that the sin the law exposes is still wrong, but that we do not obtain or maintain the remission of sins by our own deeds of keeping that law. We who are under grace have no need to hide our faults in order to establish our own righteousness, nor any need to deny the righteousness the Lord has given because we have seen our

faults. That is why, with a heart that believes in grace, we can acknowledge our sins and still present ourselves to God.

Even while serving, we can do wrong by putting our own thinking first, and there are times when we feel ashamed for having hurt someone else. At such times, we must not hide the fault or insist that we were right, using grace as an excuse, but must acknowledge that fault before God. And we join our hearts once again to the baptism Jesus received from John, to the Cross on which He hung while bearing that sin, and to the resurrection by which He rose again, and confirm them once more. Since the work the Lord accomplished in this way is not a salvation that left out the sins we would commit afterward, we cannot judge that the Lord's salvation has become insufficient because of that fault. In this way, believing in the salvation He has already accomplished, we turn around from the wrong path and serve the Lord's work again; we do not serve in order to obtain the remission of sins again.

The fact that we are under grace is not an excuse for taking sin lightly, but the ground for not leaving the Lord under the weight of sin. Just because we sought only what was comfortable for ourselves today, there is no reason we must give our bodies over to that desire tomorrow as well, and just because our shortcomings have been exposed, there is no reason we must withdraw from the Lord's work forever. This is because the Lord, who received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross, has remitted even that sin completely. The strength for us, who hesitated as we watched our bodies move contrary to our desire to serve, to follow this exhortation comes from right here. Therefore, rather than waiting until our bodies become perfect, let us give our bodies over to the service we are to take on today, believing in the remission of sins the Lord has given. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The fruit borne by a person who has received eternal life as a gift

< Romans 6:15–23 >

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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Grace cannot be made an excuse for sin

There are times when, looking back now on things we once considered enjoyable, we feel ashamed. Is the heart that does not want to do those things again something that arose merely because time has passed? In today's passage, Paul sets side by side the time when we were slaves of sin and the present, when we have become slaves of God, and has us examine the fruit we had then and the fruit we have now. Since the Lord has set us free from sin, the purpose for which we live cannot be the same as before either.

Let us read verse 15. *"What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!" (Romans 6:15)*. Since it was said just before this that the reason sin does not have dominion over us is that we are under grace, the question follows: then does it not matter even if we sin? Paul says flatly that it certainly cannot be so. This is because being under grace does not mean that we have gained an excuse that it is all right to sin. Jesus delivered us from the judgment for sin, and the thought of taking that grace and enjoying sin again goes against the will with which He saved us. The words "certainly not" do not mean that a person who has received the remission of sins never does anything wrong in the flesh at all, but mean that we were not saved in order to serve sin.

So even when a fault is exposed, we cannot insist that it does not matter because there is grace. We acknowledge that fault before God and confirm once again that the Lord bore the sin of the world, which includes even that sin, when He received baptism from John, received the judgment for it in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Since acknowledging sin and believing in the remission of sins do not conflict with each other, there is no need to hide our faults,

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nor any need to place ourselves under the judgment for sin again. Grace is a salvation that makes us turn from the wrong path and follow the Lord, not a salvation that tells us that path is right.

Verse 16 makes the reason clear. *"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16)*. It means that the one who receives obedience is the master. Even if one thinks that doing as one pleases is freedom, if one keeps following wherever desire leads, it becomes a life of serving that desire, and that desire becomes that person's master. Because one cannot follow sin and yet say that one lives with no relation to sin, Paul clearly distinguishes between slaves of sin and slaves of obedience.

However, we must not read this word to mean that if a saved person commits a wrong, he falls back into death again. Verse 16 states the principle that whomever one obeys, one becomes the slave of the one who receives that obedience, and the path of a slave of sin leading to death is the path of the time when we did not know the Lord and served sin. This is because the very next word makes clear that we were once slaves of sin but have now been saved from sin. Paul is not saying that salvation is canceled day by day according to our conduct; he makes us know the difference between the life that served sin and the life that belongs to God. We who already belong to the Lord must know this difference and must not serve our own desires as though they were our master.

The liberation received by obeying from the heart

Let us read verses 17 and 18. *"But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17–18)*. Paul, in saying that we have become slaves of righteousness, first gives thanks to God. If we had broken the chains of sin by our own strength, we would have boasted of our own ability, but because we have been set free through the word of salvation that God has conveyed to us, we give thanks.

Here, the form of doctrine is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has been conveyed to us, and having obeyed from the heart means having believed in and accepted in our hearts the salvation Jesus accomplished. We cannot be saved from sin merely by changing a few outward actions. Even if we do things worthy of recognition from others, the judgment for the sins we have already committed remains as it is, so we need the Savior, who will remove those sins. Believing in what the Lord has done is the ground of this liberation.

The One who carried out the salvation that set us free is Jesus. Jesus, who received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, because of those sins shed His blood on the Cross, received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and died, and by rising again from death He remitted our sins and gave us new life. Since the sins we commit from birth until death are all included in those sins of the world, even the shortcomings exposed after we were saved are not sins left outside the Lord's redemption. What delivered us from sin is not our boast that we would overcome sin, but this salvation that Jesus actually accomplished.

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Now sin has no power to condemn us and hold us as its slaves. Having become slaves of righteousness does not mean that desires will never arise in us again, but means that we have become people who belong to God and can serve what is right. Therefore, we must not judge, just because weakness is seen, that "I have not changed at all." Since the Lord has removed our sin and given us the Holy Spirit within us, we have no reason to live as the old man, who could do nothing but follow the commands of sin.

From a shameful life to a holy life

Verse 19 teaches how a person who has been set free is to live with his weak flesh. *"I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness" (Romans 6:19)*. Paul, knowing the fact that the flesh is weak, explains by likening it to the life of a slave. It is saying that the members that once served uncleanness and lawlessness must now be used in serving righteousness, and so it tells us to let the salvation we received by believing in our hearts be shown in our actual lives as well.

Even though we have received the remission of sins, we easily repeat the ways of living we have long been used to. What we know in our hearts to be right can feel unfamiliar to the body, and what we know to be wrong can, on the contrary, feel comfortable. The shame we feel in our hearts at such times is not because sin remains. Since the Lord had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and has already paid the price for them by shedding His blood on the Cross, that

shame is because the heart that has become righteous and the body that was used for uncleanness are at odds with each other. So, rather than waiting until all weakness disappears, we must present our bodies to what is right and get used to it, believing in the righteousness we have already received. Here, reaching holiness does not mean that we should reduce sin little by little each day and finally become righteous people. It is that a person who has received the remission of sins in his heart brings the use of his flesh, too, into line with God's will.

Then what kind of life did we live before? The word in verse 20 that we were free in regard to righteousness means that we who served sin lived with no relation at all to the righteousness of God. We did not even think about what pleases the Lord, but pursued only what was good for ourselves, and lived only for the flesh and for ourselves. We regarded such a life as freedom, but in reality we were living as slaves of sin.

Verse 21 asks what fruit we had at that very time. Even the things we considered satisfying at the time are shameful when seen before the Lord, and the end to which that sin was leading was death. That we are ashamed of those things today means that we have come to see our wrongs as the word says, without dressing them up as good memories. But the purpose of looking back on the past does not lie in bearing again the sins He has already remitted and being tormented. It is to know how precious the grace that delivered us is, and not to give our hearts over to that life again.

Eternal life is not the wages of labor but a gift

Now Paul makes clear both who we are at present and our end. *"But now having been set free from sin, and having become*

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slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:22–23). The fact that we have been saved from sin and have become slaves of God comes first, and the fruit to holiness follows after it. Since the order is not that we must bear much fruit in order to be accepted by God, we cannot judge by the size of our own labor whether we have obtained eternal life.

In a life that belongs to God, there is the fruit of valuing what is right and caring for other souls. A person who used to seek only his own pleasure comes to live a life of praying while thinking of souls who have not heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit, sharing the word with others, and serving the work by which the gospel of the water and the Spirit is spread. This is not because we are equipped with any special ability, but because the Lord uses us to preach the remission of sins to others as well. When that person comes to believe the word of salvation, rather than setting up our own merit, we come to give thanks to God, who works even through people like us.

However, we must not turn the word 'fruit' into the price paid for obtaining eternal life. While it says that the wages of sin is death, on the opposite side it did not write that the wages of righteous conduct is eternal life, but said that the gift of God is eternal life. The gift means a present that God gives, and that present is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is Jesus who received baptism from John, bore our sins, and paid the wages of sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and it is Jesus, too, who rose again from death and gave us eternal life. Therefore, apart from Jesus, we cannot demand eternal life by putting forward only our own service and sacrifice, nor is it that we have received less of the eternal life the Lord has given

because our labor was small. We serve in gratitude because the life He has already given is precious.

At the beginning, we looked at why we are now ashamed of the things we once considered enjoyable. Because the Lord, who saved us from sin through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection, has given us a different life, we have come to know anew the pleasure that sin gave and its end. Let us not collapse because of that shame, but look to the Lord, who gave us eternal life as a gift. Let us not spend the rest of our lives repeating the things of the time when we served sin, but, as befits people who belong to God, let us join together in the work of saving other souls. We do not produce fruit in order to obtain eternal life; because we have obtained eternal life, we live bearing righteous fruit together with the Lord. ✉

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◇ About the Next Series

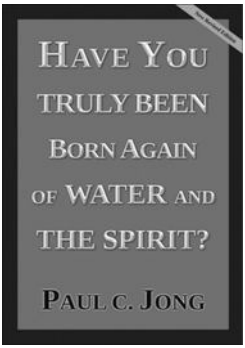
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

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.

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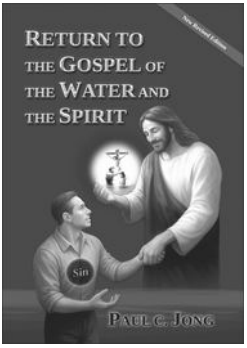
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

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.

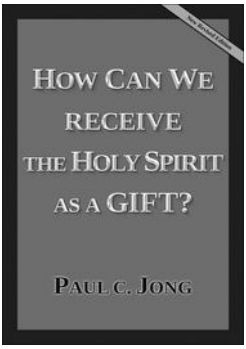
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



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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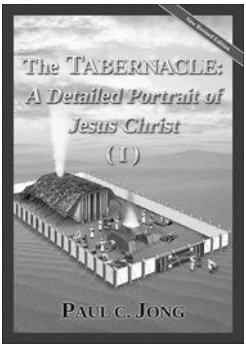
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



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]

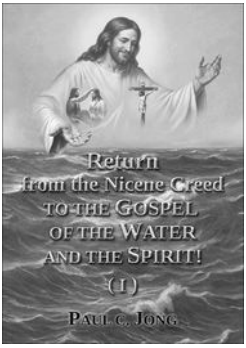


How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

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.

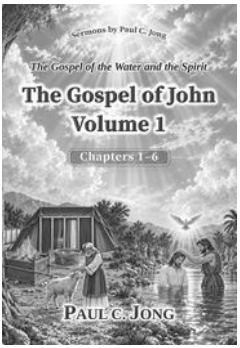
Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit?
The early church preached that Jesus took upon Himself and washed away the sin of the world through His baptism by John, fulfilling the sacrificial law of the laying on of hands.

Yet this truth was omitted from the Nicene Creed and has remained obscured for about 1,700 years. Many believers still struggle with guilt, unaware of when their sins were transferred to Jesus. This book calls us back to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through which we can receive the removal of our sins and find assurance of salvation.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of John (3-Volume Series)

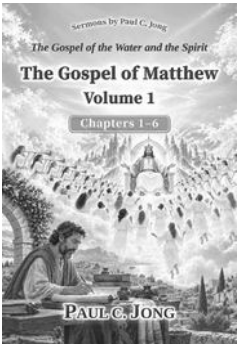


"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

John chapters 1–6 reveal who Jesus is. He is the Savior—the God who created all things, who Himself came in the flesh, received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, bore the sin of the world, received its judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead, thereby saving us perfectly once and for all. The testimony of John the Baptist, the wedding feast at Cana, Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being born again, the Samaritan woman, the sick man at Bethesda, and the bread of life all point to the same One, and the Word is unfolded in light of the salvation accomplished by Christ Jesus. Those who believe in the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus, who is God, are born again of water and the Spirit and receive eternal life.

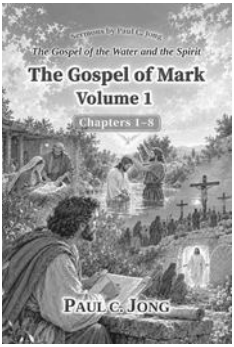
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The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Matthew (4-Volume Series)



The very first thing Jesus did as He began His public ministry was to receive baptism from John at the Jordan River. Through that baptism He had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and after He was judged through the blood of the Cross, He rose again and fulfilled all righteousness. This book proclaims, in order, the baptism of Jesus, by which He fulfilled all righteousness; the promised salvation and the assurance of the remission of sins; Jesus, who called His disciples and gave the Sermon on the Mount; and a life lived by believing in the righteousness of God. Through the sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong, which expound the genealogy and the birth, the worship of the wise men from the East, the temptation in the wilderness, the calling of the disciples, the Beatitudes, and the Lord's Prayer, it proclaims the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the basis of the remission of sins, and the way of living by believing in that righteousness and praying to the Father.

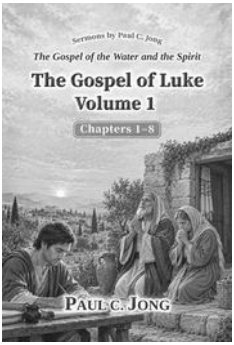
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Mark (2-Volume Series)



Mark chapters 1–8 lead us to the confession, "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). Christ means 'the Anointed One.' Jesus is the King who rules over us, the High Priest who remits sins, and the Prophet who preaches the truth of salvation. Jesus, the High Priest, had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. Bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, thereby receiving the judgment for sin in our place, and He rose again from death. I hope that, through the word of the Gospel of Mark, you will accept Jesus Christ, the Savior who is the King of kings, into your hearts.

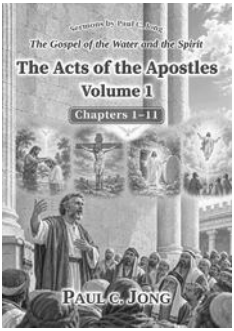
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The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Luke (3-Volume Series)



Where does the assurance that we have received the remission of sins come from? This book, which follows Luke chapters 1–8, looks at the birth of the Savior and the beginning of His work, and finds the answer in the written word. Jesus, who called sinners, is the One who came to take those sins upon Himself. Because all the sins of the world were passed on once and for all to the body that received baptism from John, Jesus received the judgment for our sins on the Cross by shedding His blood, overcame death, rose again, and accomplished salvation. When we know and believe this work He did for us, the assurance that wavered according to the state of our hearts becomes grounded in the word.

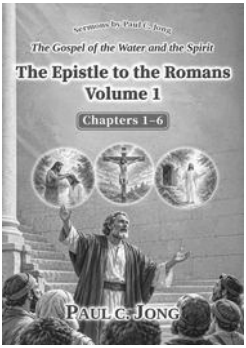
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Acts of the Apostles (2-Volume Series)



"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) Acts chapters 1–11 trace the spread of the gospel, beginning with the promise given by the risen Jesus to His disciples, His ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and continuing through the healing of the lame man at the temple gate, the martyrdom of Stephen, the great joy in Samaria, the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus, and the household of Cornelius. What the apostles preached was the fact that Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, received its judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again. And the Holy Spirit came upon those who believed in this salvation and received the remission of sins. The way of the witnesses that continued to the end of the earth is the story of those who have received the remission of sins.

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The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Epistle to the Romans (3-Volume Series)

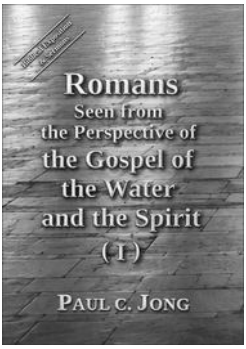


How do we, who became sinners through the disobedience of one man, Adam, become righteous? Romans chapters 1–6 show us the person who, while judging others, came to realize his own sin before the law; Abraham, who believed the God who had promised; and the person who was baptized into Christ. These chapters reveal the answer in the obedience of Jesus accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who believes in his heart in the Lord, who received baptism from John and thereby had even our sins passed on to Him as the sin of the world, who shed His blood on the Cross and was judged in our place because of that sin, and who rose again from death, receives the remission of his lifelong sins and becomes righteous freely. Because the grace of the Lord is greater than the sin and death that came from Adam, even our faults cannot bring down the righteousness of God accomplished through the obedience of One.

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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,

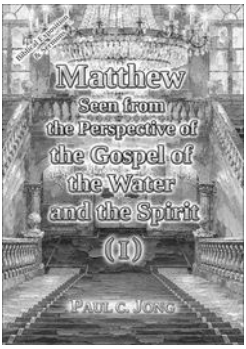
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of 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)



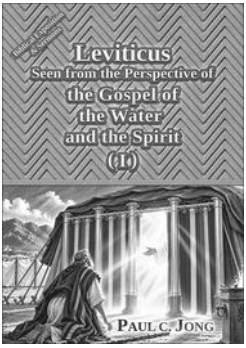
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

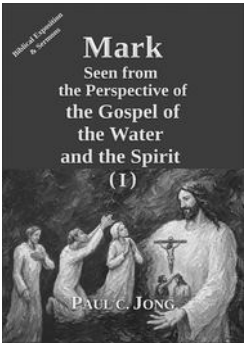


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the consecration ceremony of the priests, Aaron's first sacrifice, and the incident of Nadab and Abihu.

The author, Pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in this book, he also explains the eternal atonement Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, connecting it to the sacrifices of Leviticus.

How can a sinner be made sinless? This book gives a clear answer to that question through the Bible.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



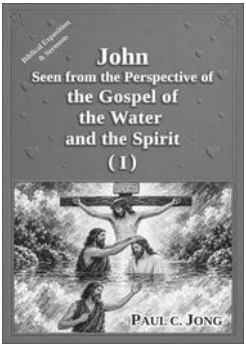
Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

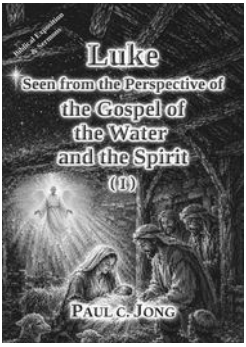


John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

The author, pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached, through the word of the Bible, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit" that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This book does not explain the signs and words of the Gospel of John as mere knowledge of the Bible or records of miracles, but guides readers to the faith by which they are saved from sin and obtain everlasting life by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

May everyone who opens this book meet Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies, and obtain true life.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)

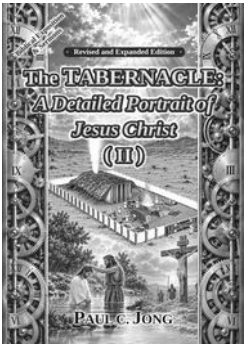


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

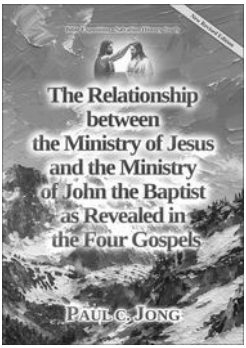
The TABERNACLE: A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (3-Volume Series)



God had the tabernacle set up in the wilderness in order to dwell among the people He had delivered out of Egypt.

Through the Biblical Exposition of Exodus chapters 25–31 and the sermons on the tabernacle, this book conveys the heart of God, who wants to make His sinful people holy and keep them near. The promise of salvation contained in the tabernacle was fulfilled when Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again. Looking into the utensils and sacrifices of the tabernacle and the office of the high priest, we come to know the meaning of the remission of sins received by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and of the eternal atonement. Through the tabernacle, we seek to know God's love for us and to share the joy of living together as His people.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels [New Revised Edition]



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.

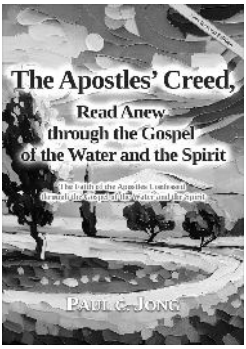
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through 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.

Visit our website to discover this and other Christian books, available as e-books (PDF/EPUB) and audiobooks.

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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.

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Contact: John Shin, General Secretary
E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



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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 had long been suffering because the problem of his sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this suffering, he came to believe that Jesus, by being baptized by John the Baptist, had the sin of the world passed on to Him once for all, received its judgment in our place through His blood on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

For about 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, and publishing sermon collections and Biblical Exposition Series that expound the Bible chapter by chapter, based solely on the Word of God.

His works continue to be published and have been translated into more than 110 languages, reaching readers in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available free of charge at www.bjnewlife.org, while paperback editions can be purchased on Amazon.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Since we have received the remission of sins, may we live in sin?

"Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:2)

The reason Paul is so firm is that we were baptized into Christ. Because Jesus, who had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross to receive that judgment in our place and rose again from death, the person who has joined his heart to this gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that the judgment for his sins was finished on that Cross. That is why we are those who have died to sin and live to God together with the Lord.

The remission of sins is the grace by which God saved us from sin so that we might serve Him. Though the flesh is weak, our Master is now not sin but Jesus Christ, so sin can no longer have dominion over us. Present your bodies to God as those who live again. This service is not a condition for becoming righteous but the fruit of a person who has already become righteous; it is living to God with the new life that we, who died to sin, have received.

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