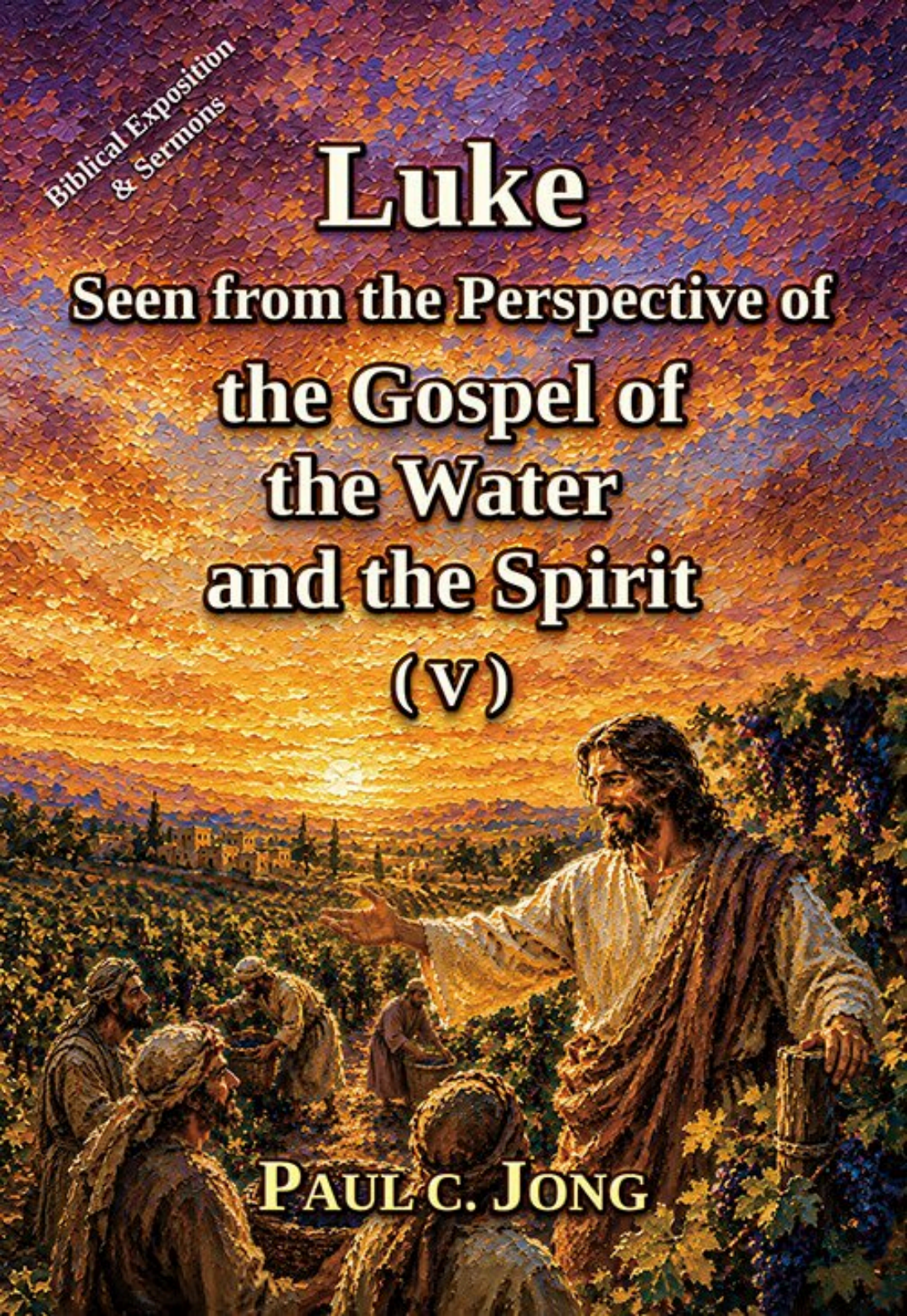
Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Luke

Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

(V)



PAUL C. JONG



“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10)

We must believe in the salvation that Jesus has accomplished for us and so become those who stand in grace.

This book examines the Word in the Gospel of Luke from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and makes clear that Jesus, who came to seek the lost, took upon Himself all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, shedding His blood and dying, and completed salvation by rising again on the third day.

Just as He entrusted the minas to those who were saved, the authority to preach the gospel comes not from a person’s position or from a religious system, but from the Lord who has given us the remission of sin.

This book invites you to meet the King who came to seek lost sinners, to believe in the salvation He has completed, and to live a faithful life, preaching this gospel to lost souls together with the Church until the day He comes again.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

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

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First of all, we are delighted that this book has reached you well, and we give great thanks to God.

Our 'The New Life Mission,' established in 1991, is carrying out a literature mission ministry that translates and distributes Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual sermon collections into multiple languages worldwide.

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

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Please join us in this beautiful literature ministry so that the gospel of truth may reach lost souls in these last days. We pray that God's blessings will be with you.

Luke
Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit
(V)

PAUL C. JONG

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

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Luke seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (V)

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

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

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

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

PAUL C. JONG

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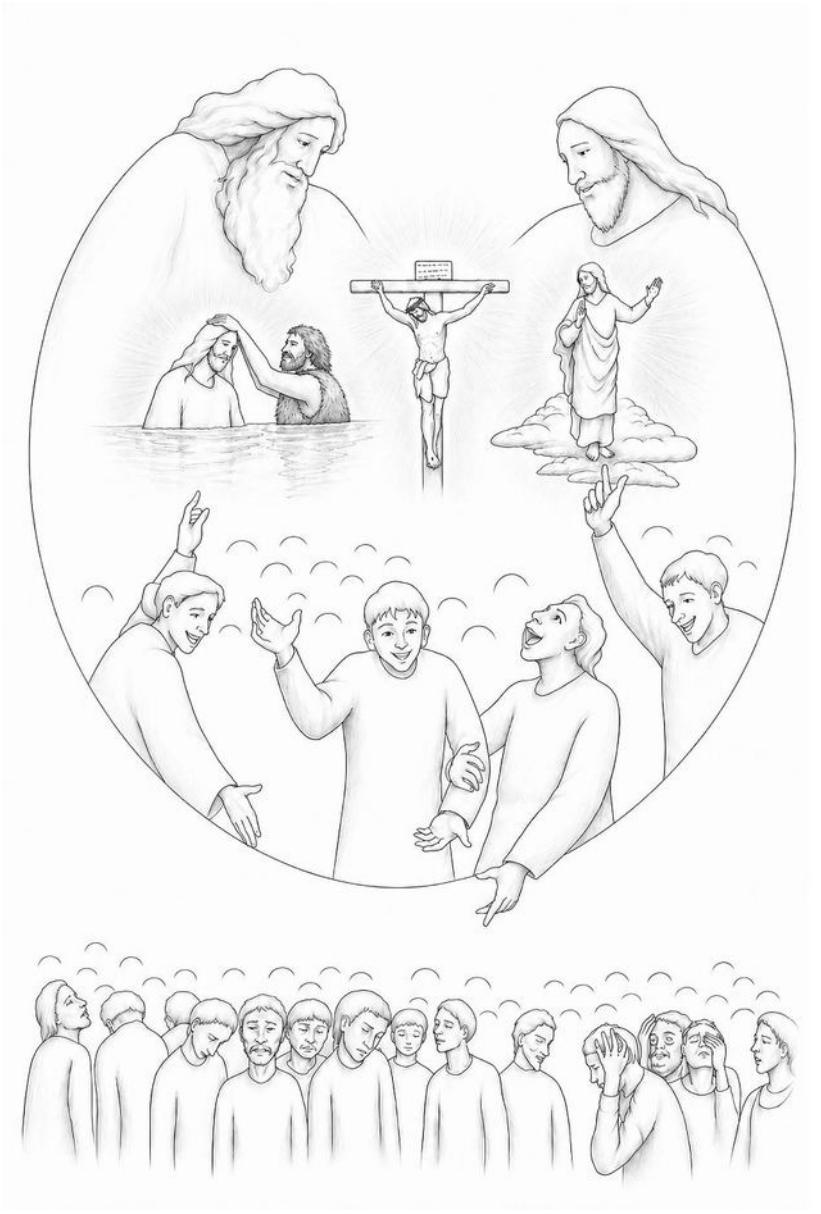

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Preface

To read the Gospel of Luke is not merely to learn, as knowledge, what Jesus did and taught. It is to know through the word what God has done to seek and save lost sinners, and to believe in the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Volume 5 of the Gospel of Luke shows how the person who has believed in that salvation must serve Jesus as his own King, use everything he has received from the Lord for the preaching of the gospel, and live with the hope of the resurrection and the second coming.

Volume 5 of the Gospel of Luke covers Luke chapter 19 through chapter 22. Through Jesus, who came to visit Zacchaeus, and the parable of the minas, we examine the grace that saves lost sinners and the life that serves the Lord as King. Next we learn about the authority that God has given to preach the gospel and the hope of the resurrection, and about the life that believes the written word and preaches the gospel even in the last days. Finally we examine the new covenant established at the Passover table, the attitude of the one who serves, and the faith that prays so as not to enter into temptation. All these words call us to believe the salvation Jesus completed, to wait for the Lord who will come again, and to be faithful in preaching the gospel entrusted to us.

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Jesus the King, who seeks and saves the lost and entrusts the gospel to us

In Luke chapter 19, Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector whom the people despised as a sinner, but he climbed up a sycamore tree to see who Jesus was. Jesus knew his sins and his shortcomings, but He did not turn away from him; He came to him first and saved him. Zacchaeus confessed that he would share his goods and pay back what he had taken unjustly, but this was not because he was trying to obtain salvation by those deeds. It was that the heart that had believed in and received Jesus as his Savior showed itself as a change in his life. The person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also comes to live for the Lord who saved him and for the work of saving souls.

The parable of the minas that follows teaches that the saved person must live with Jesus as his own King. The Lord has given us salvation and the Holy Spirit, and He has also entrusted to us the faith, the talents, and the circumstances with which to serve His work. Therefore the saved person must not keep what he has received from the Lord for himself alone, but must use it for the preaching of the gospel. Just as the colt was loosed from the place where it was tied and was used by Jesus, the saints do not keep their hearts tied to the world but answer the calling of the Lord. A life that serves the gospel is not the price of salvation, but the response of faith to the grace received first.

The authority to preach the gospel and the hope of the resurrection

In Luke chapter 20, the chief priests and the scribes ask Jesus

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by what authority He teaches the people and preaches the gospel. Jesus asked them in return whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. They could not answer because they were afraid of the people, but Jesus is God, who made all things, and the Savior, who came to save sinners. Jesus took upon Himself the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and then completed salvation by rising from the dead.

To the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, the authority and the mission to preach this salvation to the world have been given. This authority does not come from a person's position or from a religious system, but comes from the Lord. Also, the resurrection of Jesus is the sure guarantee that those who believe in Him will also surely rise again. Therefore, even when the circumstances of the world are difficult, the saints do not despair, but preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, hoping for the resurrection, the Millennial Kingdom, and the eternal kingdom of God.

A life that believes the written word and prepares for the last days

In Luke chapter 21, Jesus said that the splendid temple would be torn down, and that in the last days there would be deception, wars, earthquakes and famines, persecution and tribulation. He gave these words so that the saints would not fear what is to come or fall into deception, but would prepare their faith. Even if we are persecuted because of the gospel in the last days, the Holy Spirit gives the words and the wisdom we need, and also gives the strength to endure hardship. Therefore we must believe

the word of the Lord, which will by no means pass away, rather than our own weakness or the rumors of the world.

Jesus told us to take heed to ourselves lest our hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and to watch and pray always. To prepare for the last days is not to abandon all the affairs of the world and wait only for that day. It is to live faithfully the life entrusted to us, and yet not to have our hearts taken captive by the affairs of the world, but to seek first the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel. Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit today, even if the Lord were to come tomorrow, is the life that believes the written word and prepares for the last days.

A life that believes the new covenant, serves, and prays

In Luke chapter 22, Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples with the suffering of the Cross before Him. The Lord said that the bread was His own body, given for the disciples, and that the cup was the new covenant established in His blood, shed for them. Jesus had taken charge of the sins of mankind on His own body with the baptism He received from John, and now He was about to shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of all those sins. The Passover table reminds us of the fact that Jesus gave His own body and blood to save sinners. The saints must believe this salvation, which the Lord completed, just as the word says.

Even at the Passover table, the disciples disputed over which of them was the greatest. But Jesus said that He was among them as the One who serves. The Lord served us first by removing our sins with His baptism and the Cross and making us the children

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of God. Therefore the saved person does not put forward his own position or merit, but, in thanksgiving for the love received first, serves the saints and the Church and preaches the gospel to souls. We serve the Lord not in order to demand a reward, but because we are thankful for the grace of salvation He has bestowed.

Peter was confident that he could go with Jesus both to prison and to death, but the Lord already knew that he would deny Him three times. Even so, Jesus prayed that Peter's faith should not fail, and told him to strengthen the faith of the brothers after he had turned back. Our resolutions and our will are weak, but if the Lord, who knows all things, holds us up, we can rise again and live by faith.

Jesus also prayed earnestly on the Mount of Olives, asking that the will of God the Father, rather than His own will, be done. And He told the disciples to watch and pray so as not to enter into temptation. The saints must not rely only on their own strength and wisdom, but must ask for the help of God for themselves, for the Church, and for the preaching of the gospel. To live by faith one step at a time, asking the Lord for help, is the way to overcome hardship and temptation and to serve the gospel to the end.

Before reading this book

This book is arranged so that the word of Luke chapter 19 through chapter 22 may be examined through 'Biblical Exposition,' 'Questions and Answers,' and the sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong. Part 1 of the Biblical Exposition examines the text divided into the general perspective and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and helps the reader understand the context of the text and the meaning of salvation.

Part 2 divides the text according to its content and unfolds the central events and teachings of each passage in the form of a sermon. The Questions and Answers concisely organize the main verses and themes and help the reader confirm again what he has examined in the Biblical Exposition.

The sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong convey how we must apply the word of the text to our life of faith and to the preaching of the gospel. They exhort us to believe in Jesus, who came to seek lost sinners, to serve Him as our own King, and to use what we have received from the Lord for the preaching of the gospel. They also lead us to live by the faith that hopes for the resurrection and the second coming and believes the written word, serves the Church and souls with the grace received from the Lord, and prays so as not to enter into temptation.

The purpose of this book does not stop at accumulating knowledge about the Gospel of Luke. It lies in helping the reader believe, as his own salvation, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. It also lies in leading him to serve Jesus as his own King, to be united with the Church and preach the gospel entrusted to him, and to live by the faith that waits for the Lord who will come again.

I hope that everyone who reads this book will realize the love of Jesus, who came to seek lost sinners, and the grace of the new covenant, in which He gave His own body and blood, and will believe in the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I hope that each one will serve Jesus as his own Savior and King, ask for the help of God in the face of hardship and temptation, and be faithful to the work of the gospel that saves souls, with the hope of the resurrection and the kingdom of God. ✉

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CHAPTER

19

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Luke Chapter 19

Part 1. Understanding the text passage by passage and its gospel-based interpretation

Luke chapter 19 shows Jesus who seeks and saves lost sinners like Zacchaeus, Jesus who will come again with kingly authority, the humble King who enters Jerusalem, the Lord who weeps as He looks at the city that refused salvation, and the Lord who cleanses the temple. We will examine each text in turn through the general interpretation of its context and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. The repentance and salvation of Zacchaeus (19:1–10)

"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.' Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false

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accusation, I restore fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

General interpretation of the text

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector of Jericho and a rich man. Because tax collectors were regarded as people who took unjust gain while collecting taxes for Rome, they were treated as sinners in Jewish society.

Zacchaeus, who was short, climbs up a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus. Jesus recognizes him first and says that He will stay at his house. People complain that Jesus has gone into the house of a sinner, but Jesus personally accepts Zacchaeus, who had been rejected by society.

Zacchaeus declares that he will give half of his property to the poor, and that if he has taken anything from anyone by deception, he will repay it fourfold. This does not mean that he purchased salvation with charity or restitution; it shows that as a result of meeting Jesus, his view of riches and his life were actually changed.

Jesus declares that Zacchaeus also is *"a son of Abraham"* and says that salvation has come to his house. The purpose for which the Son of Man has come is to seek and to save the lost.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—He seeks and saves lost sinners

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and a rich man. But the

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fact that he had many possessions could not satisfy even his heart. He tried to see who Jesus was, and when he could not see Him because of the crowd, being short, he climbed up a sycamore tree. His desire to meet Jesus was greater than his concern about what people thought of him..

Jesus called Zacchaeus by name even before Zacchaeus introduced himself. It looks as if Zacchaeus sought Jesus, but in fact Jesus knew the lost Zacchaeus and came to find him. Salvation is not a sinner going up to God by his own good deeds, but the grace the Lord accomplishes by coming to find the sinner.

After receiving Jesus joyfully, Zacchaeus said that he would give half of his possessions to the poor, and that if he had taken anything from anyone by deception, he would repay it fourfold. This was not a condition for buying salvation. Jesus first declared that salvation had come to his house, and the change in Zacchaeus was the fruit of faith that appeared after he had received that salvation.

Jesus had already taken upon Himself the sins of all mankind, including Zacchaeus, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. And bearing those sins He had taken upon Himself, He went up to Jerusalem and received the judgment on the Cross. Zacchaeus received the Savior who had come to find him, and that faith appeared as a change in his attitude toward possessions and in his life toward people.

Being a son of Abraham also does not mean physical lineage alone. The person who believes the promise of God like Abraham becomes a son of Abraham by faith. A new heart and life like those of Zacchaeus must also appear in the person who has known and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sin.

2. The parable of the minas (19:11–27)

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, "Do business till I come." But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." 'And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, "Master, your mina has earned ten minas." And he said to him, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." And the second came, saying, "Master, your mina has earned five minas." Likewise he said to him, "You also be over five cities." 'Then another came, saying, "Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow." And he said to him, "Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?" 'And he said to those who stood by, "Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas." (But they said to him, "Master, he has ten minas.") "For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine,

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who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.”’”

General interpretation of the text

When Jesus comes near Jerusalem, people think that the kingdom of God will be completed immediately. Jesus speaks the parable of the minas to teach that there is a time of waiting and responsibility until the completion of the kingdom of God.

A nobleman, leaving for a far country to receive a kingdom, gives his servants one mina each and commands them to do business until he returns. After he returns as king, he settles accounts on how the servants have used the money entrusted to them.

The servants who have gained ten times and five times with the money entrusted to them are praised and take on greater responsibility. But one servant, fearing his master, kept the money wrapped up in a handkerchief. He thought of his master as a strict man, but with that thought as his excuse he did not carry out the responsibility entrusted to him at all.

This parable does not mean that one must gain much with one’s talents or money to be saved. It means that while waiting for the second coming of Jesus and the completion of the kingdom of God, each person must faithfully use the time, riches, and abilities entrusted to him.

The ending in which the people who rejected the king are judged is a figurative expression that shows the seriousness of rejecting the kingship of Jesus to the end. It is not a command that justifies violence, but emphasizes the final responsibility and judgment that follow rejecting the reign of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must wait for the King who will come again and be faithful to the gospel

When Jesus came near Jerusalem, people thought that the kingdom of God would appear immediately. But Jesus spoke the parable of a nobleman who goes to a far country to receive a kingdom and then returns.

The nobleman who left to receive a kingdom shows Jesus, who would rise from the dead, ascend, and come again with kingly authority. Before He left, the master entrusted one mina to each of his servants and told them to do business until he returned.

The one mina can be seen as including the salvation and the gospel the Lord has entrusted to the saints, together with the help of the Holy Spirit, and also life, time, material things, and talents. These are not originally ours but things the Lord, the King, has entrusted to us. The saints must not hide away what they have received only for their own desires, but must use it for the gospel and souls.

The servants who gained ten minas and five minas differed in the size of their results, but they both acknowledged their master as king and obeyed his command. On the other hand, the servant who kept the one mina wrapped up in a handkerchief thought of his master only as an austere man. He called him master with his mouth, but in reality he did not know his master's heart, and he did not obey his kingship either.

The labor of serving the gospel is not a price that buys salvation. First, one must know the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, believe it in one's heart, and receive the remission of sin. After that, one serves Jesus who saved him as King, and bears the fruit of the

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gospel with what has been entrusted to him.

Jesus will surely come again. On that day He will examine how each one has used what was entrusted to him, and He will judge the people who have not received Him as King. Therefore, the saints must not stop at vaguely waiting for the second coming of Jesus, but must serve the gospel in the place entrusted to them now.

3. He enters Jerusalem as King (19:28–40)

"When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, saying, 'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, "Why are you loosing it?" thus you shall say to him, "Because the Lord has need of it."' So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, 'Why are you loosing the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord has need of him.' Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: '"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.'"

General interpretation of the text

Near the Mount of Olives, Jesus tells His disciples to bring a colt on which no one has ever sat. Jesus enters Jerusalem riding that donkey.

People spread their outer garments on the road, and praise God as they remember the mighty works Jesus has done. Using the words of the Psalms, they cry out, *"The King who comes in the name of the LORD!"*

Jesus is welcomed as King, but He rides not a war horse but a donkey. This shows the fact that the kingship of Jesus has the character of humility and peace rather than of military conquest or secular power.

When some Pharisees demand that He silence His disciples, Jesus answers that if they keep silent, the stones will cry out. The fact that Jesus is the King sent by God cannot be hidden, and the saving work of God through Him ought to be proclaimed.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must testify to what the Lord has done

Jesus had His disciples loose and bring a colt on which no one had ever sat, and He entered Jerusalem riding that donkey. This colt refers to the worker of God who has received the remission of sin and is used by the Lord.

The colt received the welcome and glory of the people not because it was great in itself, but because it carried Jesus on its back. Likewise, the worker of the gospel must be not a person who boasts of himself or displays himself, but a person through whom Jesus and the work of salvation the Lord has done are revealed.

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Jesus came to this earth in the body of a man and took upon Himself all our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. And bearing the sin of the world, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment for sin, and He saved us by rising from the dead. What the worker of the gospel must testify to is precisely this work of salvation the Lord accomplished for us.

The disciples rejoiced over the mighty power of the Lord and the work of salvation they had seen, and praised God. When the Pharisees told Him to rebuke His disciples, Jesus said that if they kept silent, the stones would cry out. The work of salvation God has accomplished cannot disappear or be hidden forever because of people's opposition.

The saint who has received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not remain silent about the gospel. He must become not a person who displays himself, but a worker who testifies to the work of salvation the Lord did with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

4. He sees Jerusalem and weeps (19:41–44)

"Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.'"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus looks at Jerusalem from nearby and weeps for the city. Jerusalem did not realize the way that brings peace, and did not know the time when God visited it.

Jesus foretells that enemies will one day besiege and destroy Jerusalem. Historically, this can be understood in connection with the event in which the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70.

Jesus does not delight in judgment. He sheds tears even for the city that rejected Him. In Jesus' declaration of judgment, together with a solemn warning against sin, there is deep sorrow for the people who will meet destruction because they do not repent.

True peace is not achieved by political stability or military victory alone. It can be obtained when one accepts the salvation and the reign God gives through Jesus.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must know the time of salvation and believe the gospel

Jesus saw Jerusalem from nearby and wept. That city had heard the words of the prophets God sent, and it also had the temple and the Law. But it failed to recognize the very Savior God had sent.

The people of Jerusalem expected political liberation and worldly glory, but they did not know the true peace Jesus gives. True peace is a sinner being reconciled to God. Jesus took upon Himself our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and by receiving the judgment for those sins in our

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place on the Cross, He made peace between God and sinners.

That Jesus wept shows the fact that He does not delight in sinners being judged. The Lord wanted to save Jerusalem, but they did not know the time when God visited them, and they refused the King of salvation.

The longsuffering of God must not be misunderstood to mean that there is no judgment. Jesus spoke in advance of the siege and destruction that would come upon Jerusalem. If one refuses salvation to the end, one cannot escape the judgment.

Therefore, while one is alive, one must know the time of salvation when God has visited him. One must not hold on to religious knowledge and one's own righteousness, but must know and believe in one's heart the peace Jesus made through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

5. He cleanses the temple (19:45–48)

"Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, 'It is written, "My house is a house of prayer," but you have made it a "den of thieves."' And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus enters the temple and drives out those who are doing business there, and says that the temple ought to be a house of prayer but they have made it a den of thieves.

The problem was not merely the fact that transactions needed for offerings and money changing took place in the temple. The problem was that greed and injustice using religion damaged the purpose of the temple and hindered people from coming to God.

"Den of thieves" goes beyond simply meaning that stealing took place inside the temple. It is an expression that points out the attitude of the people who, hiding in the religious space called the temple, thought that their injustice was safe.

Jesus teaches daily in the temple, but the religious leaders look for a way to kill Him. The people, on the other hand, listen attentively to Jesus' words. As Jesus, the owner of the temple, set right what was wrong there, the opposition of the leaders who wanted to keep their power and profit grew all the more.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The church must become a place where the gospel and the word are heard

Jesus entered the temple and drove out those who were doing business there. It was because the place for praying to God, hearing His word, and saving sinners had degenerated into a place for filling people's profit and greed.

When religion becomes a means of gaining material things, honor, and power, it can become like a den of thieves. The Church of God but a place where that fills human desires, but a place where sinners hear the gospel and receive the remission of sin, and where the saved saints serve the gospel with the word and prayer.

The cleansing of the temple also makes us think about how a person's heart becomes clean. Religious ordinances and good deeds cannot wash away the sins in the heart. Jesus made the

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hearts of sinners clean by taking upon Himself our sins with His baptism, receiving the judgment on the Cross, and rising from the dead.

Jesus taught the word daily in the temple. The religious leaders tried to kill Jesus, but the people drew near to hear His word. At the center of the temple there must be not material things and religious power, but the word of God.

The saved saints, too, must examine themselves before the word so that greed and their own righteousness do not settle in their hearts. They must also serve together so that the church becomes not a place that promises human success, but the house of God that clearly preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 19 conveys

Luke chapter 19 shows what kind of King Jesus is. Jesus is the King who seeks and saves lost sinners like Zacchaeus, and the King who entrusts the gospel and everything to His servants and will come again. He is also the King who rides a colt and goes toward the Cross, and the King of love who weeps as He looks at the souls that have refused salvation.

Like Zacchaeus, we must come down from our own righteousness and high-mindedness. We must know and believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

After receiving the remission of sin, we must serve Jesus as the actual King of our lives. We must use the time, material

things, and talents the Lord has entrusted to us for the gospel and souls, and, like the colt, reveal not ourselves but the salvation Jesus has accomplished. This is the life of faith lived in preparation for the King who will come again. ✉

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Part 2. An expository sermon
following the text passage by passage

The King who seeks and saves the lost

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 above, we examined each passage of Luke chapter 19 through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit side by side. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will examine in detail the salvation that comes to find lost sinners, the life that is faithful to the entrusted gospel, and the will of the King who entered Jerusalem and of the Lord who cleansed the temple.

The repentance of Zacchaeus, the parable of the minas, the event of entering Jerusalem riding a colt, the tears over Jerusalem, and the cleansing of the temple are not stories separate from one another. All these words show the fact that Jesus is the King who seeks and saves lost sinners, and that the saved person must not hide the grace he has received but must faithfully serve the gospel and souls.

The passage-by-passage expository sermon that follows examines, following the flow of the text, how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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Jesus who sought out and saved the lost Zacchaeus

"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.' Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'" (Luke 19:1–10).

He sought to see who Jesus was

Jesus entered Jericho after opening the eyes of a man who could not see near Jericho. Before that, He had told His disciples that He would suffer and die in Jerusalem and rise again on the third day. Therefore, the road passing through Jericho was not a simple journey but the road He was taking toward the Cross to complete the salvation of mankind.

Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector of Jericho, was a man of many riches, but he was treated as a sinner by the people. Living as a chief tax collector who collected taxes for Rome, he had

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become rich by extorting from people, and he also knew what kind of sinner he was. After receiving Jesus, he confessed that he would repay fourfold what he had extorted, and so made clear his intention to admit his wrong and take responsibility for it.

Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. But when he could not see Jesus because he was short and the crowd was large, he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree. Here appears the earnestness of Zacchaeus, whose heart that wanted to see Jesus was greater than his concern for people's eyes and his own dignity.

Zacchaeus climbed up the sycamore tree because he wanted to know and believe who Jesus was. But it was Jesus who first came to find the lost Zacchaeus, looked up at him from under the tree, and called him by name. The Lord knew the fact that Zacchaeus was seeking Him, and He knew all his sins and his circumstances.

Jesus said, *"Zacchaeus, make haste and come down."* Even before Zacchaeus introduced himself, the Lord knew his name and his circumstances, and said, *"Today I must stay at your house."* Jesus came in person into his life and his home to meet the lost sinner Zacchaeus and save him.

Zacchaeus made haste and came down, and received Jesus joyfully. He recognized and believed that Jesus was not a mere teacher or a man of ability, but the Son of God and the Savior who had come to save mankind from sin. Zacchaeus, who knew his own sins and lack, accepted with joy the Savior who had come to find him and His word.

"Today salvation has come to this house"

The crowd complained that Jesus had gone into the house of

a sinner. They saw only Zacchaeus's occupation and reputation, but Jesus knew his heart. Though the Lord knew all of Zacchaeus's sins and weaknesses, He did not leave him as he was, but came to give him the remission of sin and a new life.

Zacchaeus, having received Jesus, said that he would give half of his possessions to the poor, and that if he had extorted anything from anyone, he would repay it fourfold. In the heart of a man who had been gathering riches for himself, a change arose to look after his poor neighbors and take responsibility for his wrongs. The grace of meeting Jesus appeared as concrete fruit in his view of riches and his attitude toward his neighbors.

Jesus first sought out and called Zacchaeus, and Zacchaeus received the Lord, the Savior, in faith. That faith appeared as the fruit of repentance and responsibility: sharing his property and repaying what he had extorted. To such a Zacchaeus, Jesus declared, *"Today salvation has come to this house."*

Jesus declared that Zacchaeus also was *"a son of Abraham."* Zacchaeus, who had been treated as a sinner and excluded from among the people because he was a tax collector, also came to share in the blessing of salvation Abraham received by faith, by believing in Jesus and receiving Him. Being one of God's people is revealed not by one's reputation or religious status but by the faith that believes in Jesus.

The rich ruler of the previous chapter became very sorrowful because he could not let go of his riches, but Zacchaeus, after receiving Jesus gladly, came out from under the rule of riches. The rich ruler relied on his own deeds and riches, but Zacchaeus admitted his sins and believed in Jesus and the salvation He gives.

At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world, including Zacchaeus, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the

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Jordan River. And He was walking the road on which He would go to Jerusalem bearing those sins, receive the judgment for sin by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and rise from the dead to complete salvation.

Today we believe this salvation that has already been completed. Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with His baptism, received the judgment for those sins with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose again, overcoming sin and death. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, not as the reward of his own good deeds, but by the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished.

The grace of salvation appears as the fruit of a new life

A change of life like that of Zacchaeus follows the person who has received the remission of sin. If he has wronged another person, he admits it without covering it with excuses, and apologizes and takes responsibility as far as he can. He does not pile up riches only for himself but uses them for needy neighbors and for the preaching of the gospel. Such deeds are not conditions for achieving or maintaining salvation, but the fruit of thanksgiving that the saved person bears following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Church, too, must not judge people only by their past and occupation, their property and reputation, but must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to lost souls. The true gospel saves sinners from all their sins, and makes the heart and life of the saved person new in the truth.

The conclusion of the text is the word, *"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."* Jesus came to

find Zacchaeus, who knew that he was a lost sinner and was waiting for the Savior, and Zacchaeus received the Lord in faith. Today also, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins and becomes a child of God, and in thanksgiving for that grace he serves the gospel with a life of repentance, sharing, and responsibility.

Jesus the King and the gospel entrusted to us

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, "Do business till I come." But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." 'And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, "Master, your mina has earned ten minas." And he said to him, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." And the second came, saying, "Master, your mina has earned five minas." Likewise he said to him, "You also be over five cities." 'Then another came, saying, "Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow." And he said to him, "Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man,

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collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?" 'And he said to those who stood by, "Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas." (But they said to him, "Master, he has ten minas.") "For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me."'" (Luke 19:11–27).

"Do business till I come"

Jesus spoke this parable after declaring that salvation had come to the house of Zacchaeus. Because Jesus had come near Jerusalem, people expected that the kingdom of God would appear right away and that the Lord would immediately exercise visible kingly authority. But Jesus first had to accomplish the salvation of mankind through suffering, the death of the Cross, and the resurrection.

Jesus made known that the kingdom of God would not be completed right away as people expected, but that there would be a period during which the servants must carry out their mission while the king is away. The scene of a nobleman going to a far country to receive a kingdom and return shows the flow in which Jesus would accomplish salvation, go up to God the Father, and come again in the future.

At His first coming, Jesus did not come to exercise worldly kingship; He came as One who serves and as the sacrificial offering to save sinners. He took upon Himself the sins of mankind by receiving baptism at the Jordan River, shed His

blood and died on the Cross, rose again, and then ascended, and He will come again as the King of kings and the Judge.

The nobleman distributed ten minas of silver to his ten servants and commanded them to do business until he returned. The minas were not something the servants had made; they were property the master had entrusted to them. The servants, therefore, were not owners boasting of what was theirs, but stewards who had to use what was their master's according to their master's will.

The one mina represents the grace of salvation the Lord has given equally to those who believe. The Lord gives the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit to the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He has also entrusted to him the faith and the talents with which to preach the gospel and serve the work of God. Our life and health, our time and wisdom, our material things and circumstances have all been received from the Lord.

The remission of sin and eternal life are received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. The person who has received that grace must not keep the gospel the Lord has entrusted to him hidden away; he must preach the gospel and serve the Church and souls according to the will of the King who saved him. This is the life that follows in faith the command, *"Do business till I come."*

But among the citizens of that country there were people who hated the nobleman and did not want him to reign over them. The servant who kept the one mina wrapped up in a handkerchief also had this same heart. Because he did not acknowledge his master as his king, he did not follow the king's command, and he did nothing for his master.

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"Because you were faithful in a very little"

The nobleman who returned, having received the kingdom, called his servants and settled accounts on how they had done business with the minas entrusted to them. When Jesus comes again, everyone will likewise stand before the Lord. The saved believer will be evaluated on how he has served with the grace and the mission he received from the Lord. Therefore, the present life is not a time in which we may live as we please while the Lord is not visible, but a time in which we must carry out the King's command in faith.

The first servant said, *"Master, your mina has earned ten minas."* He did not boast that he had made ten minas by his own ability, but acknowledged that the one mina his master had entrusted to him was the starting point of everything. The master praised him for having been *"faithful in a very little"* and gave him authority over ten cities.

The second servant earned five minas. His result was smaller than the first servant's, but the master entrusted five cities to him as well. The text does not teach that every believer must produce a result of the same size. The circumstances and roles entrusted to each person differ, and the size of the fruit can also differ. What matters is believing that everything has been received from the Lord and being faithful in the place entrusted to us.

The remission of sin and eternal life received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are the same grace for every believer. But according to how one has served the work the Lord entrusted, there are differences in the reward and the responsibility the Lord gives. The servants who earned ten minas and five minas were put in charge of ten cities and five cities, each according to his faithfulness.

The Lord does not look merely at the size of the visible result;

He looks at the heart that believes in Him as King and is faithful in the small things He has entrusted. Rather than comparing his achievements with others, a believer must acknowledge that everything has been received from the Lord, and must faithfully serve the gospel and souls in the place entrusted to him.

"For I feared you, because you are an austere man"

Another servant kept his master's one mina wrapped up in a handkerchief and brought it back as it was. He did not do any work according to his master's command, and rather than admitting his disobedience, he accused his master of being an austere man. Because he did not believe in his master as king, he did not obey his master's word either.

Though that servant had received life, salvation, and everything from his master, he thought that his master gave nothing and was trying to take away what was his. Not believing in the goodness and grace of the Lord, he distorted the Lord who had saved him and supplied everything, as though He were a master who collects what he did not deposit.

Even today, a person can complain that the Lord demands only sacrifice from him, without thinking of the life and the grace of salvation he has received from God. He may even regard serving the gospel and the Church as a loss rather than as grace. But Jesus gave up His own body to save sinners. The grace the Lord bestowed first is incomparably greater than anything we can offer Him.

The master took the one mina from the wicked servant and gave it to the servant who had ten minas. To the person who serves in faith with the grace and the opportunities received from the Lord, He entrusts more work; but from the person who does

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not acknowledge the Lord as King and does not use what he has received, He takes away even what he has.

This wicked servant was not simply a person who bore little fruit because he lacked ability. He did not believe in his master's goodness, he rejected his command, and he would not serve his master as king. If a person, while saying that he knows the gospel and has received the remission of sin, regards Jesus only as a means of fulfilling his own desires and rejects His kingship to the end, he cannot in the end escape the judgment of the Lord.

"Those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them"

The word *"to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him"* means that the Lord entrusts more work to the person who serves in faith with the grace and the gospel he has received, but that from the person who does not treasure the grace he has received and does not serve the gospel, He takes away even that opportunity and blessing.

The wicked servant who kept the one mina wrapped up in a handkerchief revealed exactly the heart of the enemies who did not want the nobleman to become king. Because he did not believe in and serve the king, he did nothing for the gospel, and in the end he was deprived even of what he had received and was judged. Destruction is the end of the person who does not acknowledge Jesus as King and keeps sitting on the king's throne himself.

At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Now He was

about to go up to Jerusalem bearing those sins, receive the judgment for sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rise from the dead.

Today we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed with His baptism, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all his sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, not as the reward of his own faithfulness, but by the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished. Jesus has ascended and is reigning as King, and He will come again in the future and settle accounts for everything.

Therefore, until the Lord comes again, a believer must not hide the gospel he has received as though wrapping it up in a handkerchief. Within the circumstances entrusted to him, he must preach the gospel to his family and neighbors, and use his time, material things, and gifts to serve the Church and souls. He must not become proud or discouraged by comparing his fruit with that of others, but must be faithful in faith in the small things the Lord, the King, has entrusted to him.

Luke chapter 19, verses 11–27 teach the fact that Jesus has entrusted the gospel and a mission to believers until He comes again. The person who has been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must serve Jesus as his own King, and use everything he has received from the Lord for the gospel and souls with thanksgiving. The person who believes the King's word and is faithful even in a very little receives praise and reward from the Lord, but the person who rejects the Lord's kingship and keeps the gospel hidden will in the end be deprived even of what he has and will be judged.

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The humble King who went forward toward the Cross

"When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, saying, 'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, "Why are you loosing it?" thus you shall say to him, "Because the Lord has need of it."' So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, 'Why are you loosing the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord has need of him.' Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: '"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.'" (Luke 19:28–40).

"He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem"

After speaking the parable of the minas, Jesus went on ahead toward Jerusalem. Though He was welcomed by the people as King, He did not enter in order to seize the military might and

political power of the world. He went forward to be judged on the Cross bearing the sins of mankind He had taken upon Himself with the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and to complete salvation with the resurrection.

Jesus did not go without knowing what would happen to Him in Jerusalem. He had already told His disciples that He would be delivered to the Gentiles, be mocked and insulted, be put to death, and rise on the third day. In the words *"He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem"* appear the obedience and resolve of the Lord, who knew the saving will God had appointed and accomplished it without avoiding it.

When they drew near Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, Jesus sent two of His disciples to the village opposite them. When the disciples went, a colt on which no one had ever sat was tied there, and even the question the owners asked when they were loosing it was exactly as the Lord had said. The disciples answered, *"The Lord has need of him,"* and brought the colt to Jesus. This event shows that Jesus knew what was to come and accomplished the work of salvation sovereignly, and that the disciples obeyed His word just as it was.

"Because the Lord has need of it"

The words *"the Lord has need of it"* show that Jesus is the Owner of all things, and the One who calls the person who has received the remission of sin to be a worker of the gospel. When the Lord looses us from the bonds of the world and calls us, saying that He will use us for the gospel, it is fitting to respond in faith, saying, "Yes."

The colt that was tied shows the figure of a person who, after receiving the remission of sin through the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit, is used by the Lord. The Lord looses people who have been bound by money and people, by family and occupation, by worldly desires and their own plans, and calls them to be workers of the gospel. Therefore, the saved person must look back at what is binding him, and offer his time, property, talents, and life for the gospel and souls. The person who carries the Lord and serves the gospel is the worker who refreshes the heart of the Lord.

The disciples threw their outer garments on the colt and set Jesus on it, and they also spread their garments on the road He was taking. This was an act of welcoming Jesus as the honored King with what they had. Jesus rode not a splendid chariot or a tall horse but a young donkey; yet He was truly the King.

Jesus is the Son of God and the One who has all authority, but He humbled Himself to save sinners. He entered Jerusalem not as a king who subdues people by force, but as the King who gives up His own body to save them from sin and judgment.

"The King who comes in the name of the LORD"

When Jesus came near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples rejoiced and praised God for all the mighty works they had seen. Crying out that He was *"the King who comes in the name of the LORD,"* they publicly testified that Jesus is the Christ sent by God and the true King.

The praise *"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest"* makes us look to the salvation Jesus would accomplish. Sin makes God and man enemies, but Jesus came to solve the problem of sin completely and to bring true reconciliation and peace. This peace is not an emotional comfort obtained by leaving sin covered up as it is, but the peace that is made when sin is actually solved.

At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. Now He would enter Jerusalem bearing those sins, receive the judgment for sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rise from the dead to complete salvation.

Today we believe this salvation that has already been completed. Jesus took upon Himself our sins with His baptism, received the punishment for sin with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose again, overcoming sin and death. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is reconciled to God.

"If these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out"

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd demanded that Jesus rebuke His disciples for their praise. But Jesus said, *"If these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."* This shows that praising Jesus as King was not wrong, and that He is worthy to receive praise.

This word means that Jesus is King and that no one can stop the work of salvation God accomplishes. The person who has received the remission of sin boldly preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and gives glory to God.

Just as the donkey that carried Jesus was not the hero of the welcome, so the person who serves the gospel must not exalt himself. The respect a believer and a worker of the gospel receive is given not because that person is inherently great, but

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because of Jesus and the gospel he preaches. At the center of all gospel ministry there must be the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and freely received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit uses his time, gifts, and material things to serve the gospel and souls in thanksgiving for that grace. This devotion is the fruit borne of saved faith.

Luke chapter 19, verses 28–40 show that although Jesus entered Jerusalem in a humble figure, He was truly the King who comes in the name of the Lord. The Lord did not avoid the Cross but went on ahead to be judged for the sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism and to complete salvation with the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel exalts Jesus as King, turns to the Lord the glory he would receive, and responds to the Lord's calling in faith, preaching and serving the gospel.

Jesus who wept as He looked at Jerusalem

"Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.'" (Luke 19:41–44).

"As He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it"

Riding the colt, Jesus came near Jerusalem. The whole multitude of the disciples praised Him as *"the King who comes in the name of the LORD,"* but Jesus wept as He looked at the city of Jerusalem. The Lord saw not only the cheers before His eyes; He was seeing the unbelief inside that city and the judgment that would come upon it.

Jesus knew that in Jerusalem He would die on the Cross, rise again, and complete salvation. But He had pity on the people who were rejecting the way of salvation God had given and going toward judgment. In the tears of Jesus appear together the justice of God who judges sin and the love that wants to save sinners.

"If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace!"

The peace people expected in those days was to get out from under the rule of Rome and obtain national freedom and prosperity. But the peace Jesus gives was the true peace that restores the relationship with God that had become one of enmity because of sin. If sin remains in the heart, one cannot escape the judgment of God no matter how much property, power, and religious tradition one has. Only by believing in Jesus, whom God sent, as one's Savior and receiving the remission of sin can one enjoy true peace.

In Jerusalem there were the temple and the priests, the Law and a long religious tradition. People took pride in serving God, but they failed to recognize the very Christ God had sent. The King of peace was before their eyes, but they did not accept Him

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because He was different from what they had expected. An outward religious environment and zeal cannot take the place of the faith that believes in Jesus.

In the words *"now they are hidden from your eyes"* is contained the result of rejecting the Lord by holding on to one's own righteousness and religious authority even after seeing the words and the power of Jesus. If one repeatedly rejects the word of God, one's spiritual discernment grows dark, and in the end one comes to regard unbelief as right without even knowing what one is rejecting.

"They will not leave in you one stone upon another"

Jesus said that the day would come when enemies would build an embankment, surround Jerusalem, and close it in on every side. The inhabitants of the city and their children would suffer terrible destruction, and the city would be torn down until not one stone was left upon another. This prophecy was fulfilled in the event in which the Roman army besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the temple in AD 70. The unbelief that refused the time when God visited them led to actual judgment.

The reason Jerusalem was judged is that it did not know *"the time of your visitation."* The day of visitation is the time of grace when God came to visit His people and sent Jesus, the Christ, to save them. Though they heard His words and saw His mighty works, they put their own thoughts and religious authority first and rejected the Lord. They boasted of the temple, their lineage, and the Law while not accepting the Christ; but if one rejects Jesus, the owner of the temple, even the visible temple cannot hold back the judgment.

"Because you did not know the time of your visitation"

At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world, including the people of Jerusalem, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. And He was going the way on which He would enter Jerusalem bearing those sins, receive the judgment for sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rise from the dead to make true peace between God and sinners.

Today we believe the gospel that has already been completed. Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with His baptism, received the punishment for sin with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose again, overcoming sin and death. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is reconciled to God.

Jerusalem failed to recognize the King of peace even though He had come near. Even today, if one relies on church buildings and denominations, church offices and religious careers, while rejecting the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, one becomes like the people who did not know the time of visitation.

Therefore, we must not take lightly the time when God lets us hear the gospel. We must not put it off, saying that we will believe later, but must lay down our own righteousness and stubbornness now. Now, when we accept in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed, is the time of grace to receive the remission of sin and be reconciled to God.

Just as Jesus wept as He looked at Jerusalem, the saved person must have pity on the souls that will be judged, and must pray and preach so that they may hear the gospel and receive the

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remission of sin. Just as Jesus, even while shedding tears, spoke clearly of the judgment that would come, the person who preaches the gospel must clearly proclaim sin and judgment, and the way of salvation opened through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Luke chapter 19, verses 41–44 show together the love of Jesus, who wants to save sinners, and the justice of God, who surely judges the unbelief that has rejected the Christ. Jerusalem did not recognize the day of visitation when the King of peace came to it. But today the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins, is reconciled to God, escapes the judgment, and obtains eternal life.

Jesus who restored the house of prayer

"Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, 'It is written, "My house is a house of prayer," but you have made it a "den of thieves."'" (Luke 19:45–46).

Jesus, the owner of the temple, drove out those who were doing business there

Jesus entered the temple after weeping as He looked at the city of Jerusalem and speaking of the judgment that would come upon it. The spiritual state of Jerusalem, which had failed to recognize the time of grace when God visited it, was revealed also in the degeneration of the temple. Because the temple, where people ought to have sought God and asked for His grace, had turned into a place of business and self-interest, Jesus, the

owner of the temple, drove out with holy authority those who were doing business and set right that wrong.

The problem lay in pursuing one's own profit by using the service of God, in material things and greed pushing out the word of God and prayer, and in hiding injustice and exploitation under religious authority. When even the sacrifices offered to God turned into a means of gaining profit, the temple became not a place for seeking God but a marketplace for filling human greed.

"My house is a house of prayer"

Jesus said, *"My house is a house of prayer."* The house of God is not a place where people fill their own desires, but a place where they seek God and ask for His word and His grace. Therefore, everything done in the church must follow the purpose of exalting God and saving souls.

The words *"you have made it a 'den of thieves'"* are a very solemn rebuke. A den is a place where those who have done evil hide and consider themselves safe. That they had made the temple a den of thieves means that they hid greed and injustice behind a religious appearance while still regarding themselves as people who belonged to God. Jesus did not tolerate a holy place being used as a hiding place that covers sin and self-interest.

In the act of driving out those who were doing business appear the authority and the holy judgment of Jesus, the owner of the temple. Jesus, the Son of God, exposed the sin of defiling the temple for one's own profit and set the house of God upright again according to its original purpose.

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The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes the heart clean

That Jesus set right the outward order of the temple also makes us think about the way a sinner's heart becomes clean. The sins of the heart are not removed by tidying up a chapel, reforming religious institutions, or performing many prayers and good deeds. For a sinner to become clean before God, sin itself must be completely solved, and that work Jesus accomplishes.

At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. Now He was going the way on which He would receive the judgment for sin by being hung on the Cross bearing those sins and shedding His blood and dying, and would rise from the dead to complete salvation.

Today we believe this completed gospel. Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with His baptism, received the punishment for those sins with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose again, overcoming sin and death. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The righteousness of God that Jesus completed makes the sinner's heart clean.

The person who has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit and become the temple of God does not leave greed and his own righteousness to rule his heart; he seeks the will of God with the word and prayer and serves the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The church, too, must not put finances and sales, buildings and the profit of leaders, ahead of worship and the gospel, but must manage the material things entrusted to it honestly and use them to serve the gospel, souls, and needy

neighbors.

We receive the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. In thanksgiving for that grace, the saved person does not use God as a tool for his own desires, but uses the material things and the life entrusted to him for the gospel and souls.

Luke chapter 19, verses 45–46 rebuke the faith that pursues greed and self-interest under the name of serving God. The person whose heart has become clean by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not hide sin behind a religious appearance; he seeks the Lord's will with the word and prayer and lives with the gospel at the center.

Jesus who taught the word of salvation daily

"And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him" (Luke 19:47–48).

Jesus taught daily in the temple

After driving out those who were doing business in the temple, Jesus taught the word of God there daily. He did not stop at emptying the temple of what was wrong; He filled it with the word so that people would know the will of God and the way of salvation. The house of God had to be not a place ruled by human greed and profit, but a place where people hear the word of God and seek Him.

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That Jesus taught *"daily"* means that He did not stop His ministry of the word even as the time of the Cross drew near and the opposition grew. Emphasized here are the faithfulness and love of the Lord, who kept preaching the word of salvation to the people even in the face of the threat of death.

The religious leaders plotted to kill Jesus

The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people plotted to kill Jesus. In chapter 20 that follows, they challenged Jesus, asking by what authority He taught in the temple and did these things. When the authority and teaching of Jesus exposed their wrongs and shook the religious order they had established, they opposed the Lord in order to protect their own authority. They regarded their own positions and people's reactions as more important than the truth of the word.

They had high religious offices and much Bible knowledge, but they failed to recognize Jesus, the owner of the temple and Himself the Word. As a result of putting their own righteousness and authority ahead of the truth, they tried to kill the Son whom God had sent, even while claiming to serve God.

All the people listened to Him attentively

The reason the leaders could not find a way to kill Jesus right away is that all the people listened attentively to His words. The people inclined their hearts not to the authority of the religious leaders but to Jesus, who preached the word of life and salvation.

Faith begins with hearing the word of the gospel. A sinner comes to know through the word the salvation Jesus

accomplished, believes it in his heart, and receives the remission of sin. Therefore, one must not stop at piling up Bible knowledge, but must believe in the Savior to whom that word testifies and in the salvation He completed.

The standard of faith is not a person's status or popularity or the support of the majority, but the word of God that Jesus preached. Before the word, a person must lay down his own thoughts and authority, and accept who Jesus is and what He has accomplished for him.

The leaders tried to kill Jesus with evil intent, but even people's opposition and schemes could not tear down God's plan of salvation. At the time God had appointed, Jesus went to the Cross willingly to save sinners.

At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. Bearing the sins He had taken upon Himself, He was willingly walking the way on which He would receive the judgment for sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and would rise from the dead to complete salvation.

Today we believe the gospel Jesus completed. Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with His baptism, received the judgment for those sins with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose again, overcoming sin and death. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Today the Church, too, must put at its center the work of teaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. It must not change the gospel according to people's reactions and trends, but must preach the word of the remission of sin steadily and clearly. Believers also must listen

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to the word of God, and even in the midst of opposition and hardship they must preach the word and serve so that other souls can hear the gospel.

Luke chapter 19, verses 47–48 contrast Jesus, who taught the word of salvation daily, with the religious leaders, who tried to kill Him to protect their own authority. A person must listen to the words of Jesus and believe in his heart the salvation He completed with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 19

[Question] 1. Explain the contents of Luke chapter 19 by dividing them according to the main events.

Luke chapter 19 records the events from Jesus meeting Zacchaeus in Jericho to His teaching daily in the temple in Jerusalem. The contents can be divided into five parts.

First, verses 1–10 are the salvation that came to Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector and a rich man, climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus. Jesus called him by name and stayed at his house, and after receiving Jesus, Zacchaeus confessed that he would share his property with the poor and repay what he had extorted. This was not the price of salvation but the fruit of change that appeared in the person who received Jesus in faith.

"And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'" (Luke 19:9–10).

Second, verses 11–27 are the parable of the ten minas. People thought that the kingdom of God would appear right away, but Jesus spoke of a nobleman who leaves to receive a kingdom and returns, and of the servants who received minas from him. When the king returns, the faithful servant receives praise and authority, the servant who did not use what was entrusted to him is rebuked, and the enemies who refused his reign are judged. This parable teaches us to carry out faithfully the work entrusted to us until Jesus the King comes again.

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Third, verses 28–40 are the event of Jesus entering Jerusalem riding a colt. The disciples brought the colt just as Jesus had said, and the multitude praised Jesus as the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Jesus is not a king who puts forward the power of the world, but the promised King who comes humbly and saves sinners.

Fourth, verses 41–44 are Jesus seeing Jerusalem and weeping over it. Jerusalem did not realize the time when God visited it or the things that make for its peace. Knowing that the city would be besieged by its enemies and torn down, Jesus had pity on the souls that would be judged, and wept.

Fifth, verses 45–48 are the cleansing of the temple. Jesus drove out those who were doing business, declared that the house of God is a house of prayer, and taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people did not accept His word and looked for a way to kill Jesus.

All these events show what kind of King Jesus is. Jesus seeks and saves the lost, entrusts work to His people, and rules the house of God with the word. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The person who has believed this gospel must show a change of life like Zacchaeus, serve Jesus the King, and faithfully carry out the work of the gospel entrusted to him.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 19 verse 1, on what journey and where did Jesus meet Zacchaeus?

Jesus met Zacchaeus when He entered Jericho and was passing through it on His journey toward Jerusalem.

"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho" (Luke 19:1).

The previous chapter records that Jesus healed a blind man by the road when He came near Jericho, and after the event of Zacchaeus the Gospel records that He again went on ahead toward Jerusalem. Therefore, the meeting with Zacchaeus took place while Jesus was passing through Jericho on His way up to Jerusalem.

Jericho was not a place Jesus simply passed by, but a place where the grace of salvation appeared to two people. Near Jericho a blind man called Jesus the Son of David and received his sight, and inside Jericho Zacchaeus received Jesus and his life was changed. Even on the road toward Jerusalem, Jesus attended to the cry and the heart of one person seeking salvation.

This event clearly shows that Jesus is the One who comes to find the lost. Zacchaeus first tried to see Jesus, but it was Jesus who called him by name, stayed at his house, and proclaimed salvation. The beginning and the center of salvation lie in the grace of Jesus, who knows sinners and comes to find them.

Even while going forward toward the work of salvation He would accomplish in Jerusalem, Jesus did not pass over Zacchaeus of Jericho. He went to the place of Zacchaeus's daily life, called him by name, and revealed His will to seek and to save the lost.

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[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 19 verses 3–4, why did Zacchaeus climb up a sycamore tree to see Jesus?

Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was, but he could not because he was short and the crowd was large; so he ran ahead along the way Jesus would pass and climbed up a sycamore tree.

"And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way" (Luke 19:3–4).

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and a rich man, but with his position and property he could not see Jesus. He did not turn away because of the difficulty, but with a heart determined to see Jesus he looked for another way. That action shows his earnest interest in Jesus and his active attitude.

Zacchaeus regarded seeing Jesus as more important than the eyes of the many people and his own dignity. Though he had the position of a chief tax collector, he was not ashamed to run ahead and climb a tree. When his heart that wanted to know Jesus met an obstacle, he did not give up but acted resolutely.

We, too, must not stop at watching Jesus as a famous figure of the world, but must know who He is through the written word. Jesus is the Creator and the Son of God who seeks and saves sinners. When we hear this fact, we must accept it with joy like Zacchaeus and respond in faith.

But it was Jesus who completed the meeting. Jesus looked up at Zacchaeus from beneath the sycamore tree and called him by name. Hearing that call, Zacchaeus made haste, came down, and received Jesus with joy. The act of climbing the sycamore tree did not become the price of salvation; rather, he accepted in faith the grace of Jesus, who had come to find him, the lost one.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 19 verse 5, what did Jesus do when He saw Zacchaeus up in the sycamore tree?

Jesus looked up into the sycamore tree, called Zacchaeus by name, told him to make haste and come down, and said that He must stay at his house that day.

"And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.'" (Luke 19:5).

Jesus did not pass by Zacchaeus as just one man in the crowd. He knew the circumstances and the heart of the chief tax collector whom people condemned as a sinner, and He sought him out and called him first. Zacchaeus made haste, came down, and received Jesus joyfully.

In the words *"today I must stay at your house"* appears Jesus' clear will to save Zacchaeus. Jesus did not wait until Zacchaeus first made himself clean; He entered the house of the man who was called a sinner. In the heart and life of Zacchaeus, who received that grace, a real change took place.

People complained that Jesus had gone into the house of a sinner, but Jesus said that Zacchaeus also was a son of Abraham. The faith that believes in Jesus matters more than lineage or people's evaluation. Jesus is not One who keeps sinners at a distance and abandons them, but One who comes to find them, saves them, and leads them into a new life.

Zacchaeus, having received Jesus, confessed that he would give half of his possessions to the poor and repay fourfold anything he had extorted. Jesus proclaimed that salvation had come to this house today. This change was not buying salvation with good deeds; it was the fruit of repentance and faith that appeared after he believed in and received Jesus the Savior.

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[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 19 verse 11, why did Jesus go on to speak the parable of the ten minas?

Jesus went on to speak the parable of the ten minas because people thought that the kingdom of God would appear right away, since He had come near Jerusalem.

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately" (Luke 19:11).

The nobleman of the parable, leaving for a far country to receive a kingdom, entrusts one mina to each of his servants and commands them to do business till he comes. After receiving the kingdom and returning, he settles accounts on how the servants have used what was entrusted to them. This word shows that the kingdom of God is not completed immediately as people expected; rather, while the king is away, the servants are given time to be faithful, and when the king returns there is a settling of accounts.

People expected that when Jesus entered Jerusalem, He would soon establish a visible kingdom. But Jesus said that He would first accomplish the work of saving sinners, go to God, and then come again. The period before the king returns is not a time for the servants to do nothing and wait, but a time to use what they have received and accomplish their master's will.

To have been entrusted with a mina means to have received the responsibility of managing what belongs to the master. The gospel, the Church, and the service entrusted to the saints are not possessions for their own honor either. They must be used, according to the will of Jesus the King, to preach the word of salvation to people and to serve souls.

In the parable there also appear people who do not want the nobleman to become king. For the servant who believed in the

king and carried out the work entrusted to him there are praise and reward, but for those who rejected the king there is judgment. Therefore, until Jesus comes again, a disciple must believe in and serve Him as King and faithfully do the work of the gospel entrusted to him.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 19 verses 12–27, in what ways are the parable of the talents in Matthew chapter 25, verses 14–30 and the parable of the minas in Luke the same, and in what ways do they differ?

The parable of the talents and the parable of the minas are the same in that the master, as he leaves, entrusts his wealth to his servants, and settles accounts on how they have used it after he returns. In both parables the faithful servants receive praise and reward, and the servant who buried or did not use what was entrusted to him receives rebuke and punishment. The lesson that one must faithfully use what has been entrusted while the master is away is also the same.

"Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, "Do business till I come"' (Luke 19:12–13).

But there is a difference in how the entrusting was done. In the parable of the talents, three servants receive five talents, two talents, and one talent respectively, each according to his ability. In the parable of the minas, ten servants receive one mina each, equally. The parable of the talents shows faithfulness according to the abilities and responsibilities each received differently, and the parable of the minas reveals how the servants who received

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the same thing used it.

The expression of the reward also differs. The faithful servants of the parable of the talents receive the praise of entering into the joy of their master, and the servants of the parable of the minas receive authority to rule ten cities and five cities according to the minas they earned. In the parable of the minas, the citizens who refused the nobleman's becoming king and the judgment that comes upon them are also specially recorded.

In the parable of the talents, the master entrusted different amounts according to the abilities of the servants, so the fact that the Lord gives each person different gifts, circumstances, and responsibilities is emphasized. In the parable of the minas, the servants each receive one mina alike, so it stands out how each of those who received the same gospel and the same command of the Lord responds with his own faith and faithfulness.

The wicked servants of the two parables are also alike in that they did not lose what was entrusted to them but did not use it. The attitude of doing nothing for fear of failure was not faithfulness. The Lord does not tell us to wait until perfect conditions are prepared, but to use in faith what we have received now.

At the settling of accounts, what is revealed is not a comparison with others, but what each received from the master and how he responded to his command. The person who received much must be faithful according to the much he received, and the person who received little according to the little. More important than the size of the result is the attitude of believing the master and acting according to his word.

The two parables do not mean that salvation is obtained by doing business. Just as the master first entrusted what was his to his servants, the life, talents, material things, and gospel mission

that the saints have were all received from the Lord. The saved person must not bury the grace he has received as if it were his own possession, but must be faithful in his own place according to the Lord's will and prepare for the king's return.

[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 19 verse 12, what does the nobleman's going to a far country to receive a kingdom mean?

The nobleman who went to a far country to receive a kingdom refers to Jesus. In this parable Jesus said that after accomplishing the work of saving sinners, He would rise from the dead, ascend, be at the right hand of God the Father, and then come again as King and Judge.

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return'" (Luke 19:11–12).

At His first coming, Jesus came as One who serves and as the sacrificial offering to save people from sin. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead. And when He comes again, as the King who has received the kingdom, He will settle accounts of His servants' work and judge those who rejected Him.

The word that the nobleman returns, having received the kingdom, means that the second coming of Jesus is certain. Jesus will come again, give reward to the faithful servant, and judge the person who did not acknowledge Him as king. Now is the time given us as an opportunity to believe in and serve that King.

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To serve Jesus as King does not stop at calling Him Lord with words only. It is acknowledging that Jesus is the Master of one's life, using one's time, talents, and material things according to His will, and preaching the gospel entrusted to us. The person who believes in the king's return does not take lightly today's small obedience.

The word that the nobleman left for a far country does not mean that the king's rule has disappeared. The servants had to believe that the king would return and work with the minas he had entrusted to them. We, too, must not live as we please because Jesus is not visible, but must believe in Him as King and faithfully carry out the gospel and the service entrusted to us until He comes again.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 19 verses 16–17, what praise and reward did the servant who earned ten minas with one mina receive from the nobleman?

The servant who earned ten minas with one mina received from his master the praise *"Well done, good servant,"* and because he had been faithful in a very little, he received authority over ten cities.

"And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities'" (Luke 19:15–17).

The master did not look only at the result the servant had

gained; he praised his faithfulness in a small thing. The servant, too, did not put forward the ten minas as the boast of his own ability, but reported that he had earned them with *"your mina."* He knew who the owner of what was entrusted to him was, and obeyed his master's command and used it diligently.

The first servant did not stop at preserving the one mina his master had entrusted to him, but earned ten minas. He believed that his master would return, and during the entrusted period he worked hard according to his master's command. He made his master's absence not an opportunity for his own convenience but an opportunity for faithfulness.

Even a small work entrusted to a saint is not insignificant before the Lord. Preaching the gospel to one person, serving the Church and the saints, and honestly carrying out the office one has received are connected with the King's kingdom. The Lord remembers the heart and labor of the person who believes in Him and is faithful, rather than the size that appears to people.

The authority over ten cities is a very great reward compared with the present small faithfulness. This shows that Jesus the King remembers the labor of the servant who has faithfully carried out the work entrusted to him and gives a fitting reward. We must not boast of the reward as our own merit, but must use what we have received from the Lord according to His will and serve with thanksgiving.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 19 verses 16–19, what was common to the servants who received their master's recognition and reward?

What was common to the servants who received their master's recognition and reward is that they did not leave the

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one mina entrusted to them as it was, but used it faithfully and bore fruit. They also reported that they had made their results with *"your mina,"* acknowledging that everything had come from their master from the beginning.

"Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities'" (Luke 19:16–19).

The first servant earned ten minas and the second made five minas, so the sizes of their results differed. But both men believed their master's command and acted, and the master recognized each one's faithfulness and gave them authority over ten cities and five cities.

When their master returned, the two servants did not hide or make excuses but immediately came forward and settled accounts. They remembered their master's command and honestly reported what they had done during the entrusted period. Faithfulness is not an attitude of working only when the master is watching, but believing his word and fulfilling one's responsibility even when he is not visible.

The reward they received was connected with the result they had gained, but the start of it all was the one mina their master had given. The fruit of the gospel is not something made by human wisdom and ability alone. We must serve with the word and the strength received from the Lord, and give glory to God who gives the fruit.

The time, talents, material things, and gospel mission that the saints have were also received from the Lord. Rather than comparing results with one another and boasting or losing heart, each must use what he has received according to the Lord's will.

The person who believes in Jesus the King treasures with thanksgiving the grace he has received from the Lord and bears the fruit of faithfulness in the place entrusted to him.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 19 verses 20–23, why did the servant who kept the one mina wrapped up in a handkerchief receive the rebuke *"wicked servant"* from his master?

The servant who kept the one mina wrapped up in a handkerchief received the rebuke *"wicked servant"* because he did not use at all what his master had entrusted to him and shifted the responsibility for it onto his master's character.

"Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'" (Luke 19:20–23).

He said that his master was an austere man who collects what he did not deposit and reaps what he did not sow. Though his master had entrusted one mina to him, he did not acknowledge the grace he had received; rather, he distorted his master as if he were an exploiter. With his mouth he called him *"Master,"* but in his heart he did not believe in him as a good and gracious king.

The master judged him by his own words. If he had really known his master to be an austere man, he ought at least to have put the money in the bank and gained interest. His doing nothing

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revealed that his excuse of fear was false and that in reality he had no heart to follow his master's command.

This servant thought he could justify himself with the fact that he had not lost the one mina. But his master's command was not to keep it safely but to do business till he came. Disobedience lies not only in the act of damaging what has been entrusted, but also in knowing a clear command and not doing it.

His calling his master austere reveals his own heart rather than his master's actual character. The master had first entrusted his own money, and he was one who gave great authority to the faithful servants. But the wicked servant did not see what he had received as grace but regarded it as a burden, and he blamed his master to cover his own laziness.

Jesus is the King who saved us from sin and gave us life and everything. If we forget that grace, we come to regard the Lord's work as a burden and a loss. The person who knows and believes the Lord rightly does not insist that what he has received is his own, but uses it with thanksgiving for the Lord's will.

[Question] 11. In Luke chapter 19 verses 20–21, besides disobedience, what wrong attitudes are revealed in the words and actions of the servant who kept the one mina wrapped up in a handkerchief?

The servant who kept the one mina wrapped up in a handkerchief reveals the wrong attitudes of distrusting and resenting his master, not acknowledging the grace he had received, and shifting his own responsibility onto his master.

"Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you,

because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow' (Luke 19:20–21).

He defined his master as an austere man and accused him of collecting what he did not deposit and reaping what he did not sow. But the very one mina he brought out was something he had received from his master. He forgot what he had received and thought that his master was trying to take away what was his.

Thanksgiving remembers what it has received, but resentment looks only at what it has not received. Though this servant had received the one mina his master entrusted to him and the opportunity to use it, he spoke like a person who had received nothing. Because he did not know his master rightly, he felt the work entrusted to him to be an unjust demand.

Our body and life, our daily bread and talents, and the opportunity to serve the Church and the gospel have all been received from the Lord. If we think we have obtained these only by our own strength, we regard the Lord's requirement as being robbed; but if we know them as grace, we come to use them with thanksgiving. Right faith trusts the goodness of the Lord and obeys Him responsibly.

The problem of this servant was not only laziness but that he did not trust his master as king. Because he did not believe in his master's goodness and grace, he did not obey his command either, and he rationalized his disobedience with the word fear. The person who knows the salvation, life, and every circumstance the Lord has given as grace responds with thanksgiving rather than resentment, and willingly serves the work entrusted to him.

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[Question] 12. In Luke chapter 19 verses 22–23, with what words did the master answer the excuse of the servant who had not used the one mina?

The master answered the servant who had not used the one mina, *"Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant."* And he asked why, if the servant had really known him to be an austere man, he had not put the money in the bank so that at his coming he might have collected it with interest.

"And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'" (Luke 19:22–23).

The master took the servant's own words as the standard and exposed his contradiction. If, as the servant claimed, the master were a man who collects what he did not deposit and reaps what he did not sow, the servant ought to have feared his master's command all the more and done at least some minimal act. But because he did nothing, his words were no more than an excuse to avoid responsibility.

The master's answer also contains the meaning that there actually was a way for the servant to work. Even if he had no ability to gain much profit, he could have done the minimal obedience of depositing the money in the bank. It was not that he could do nothing, but that he would not do anything.

The Lord knows the portion and the circumstances He has entrusted to each person. He does not demand the same result as others; He wants us to believe the word we have received and to do faithfully what we can do. We must not put off the work entrusted to us because it is small, but must begin with the

obedience we can practice now.

Before God, one cannot turn away from the mission and the opportunities one has received and then blame one's circumstances or other people. The Lord looks at the attitude that believes His word and obeys rather than at grand achievements. Faithfully carrying out even a small work is the right posture of a servant who believes in the Lord as King.

[Question] 13. In Luke chapter 19 verses 24–26, what did the master decree for the wicked servant who had not used the one mina?

The master commanded that the one mina be taken from the wicked servant who had not used it and be given to the servant who had ten minas.

"And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas.' (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 'For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him'" (Luke 19:24–26).

The people standing by said that he already had ten minas, but the master declared that to everyone who has, more will be given, and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. It means that to the person who uses in faith what the master has entrusted, greater responsibility and reward are given, but the person who buries what was entrusted to him and does not obey loses even the opportunity he received.

This decision shows that there is nothing more to entrust to the servant who did not use what belonged to his master. On the other hand, the servant who had earned ten minas knew his master's will and had been faithful, so he was recognized as one

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to whom more could be entrusted. The grace and the mission entrusted to us lead to more abundant fruit when they are used in faith.

The fact that one has heard much of the word or received an office is not enough. One must believe in one's heart the word one has heard and act according to that faith. If a person knows the gospel yet does not preach it and keeps turning away from opportunities to serve, he makes vain the precious opportunities he has received from the Lord.

The mere fact of having received the Lord's word and the mission of the gospel does not make one a faithful servant. One must believe in Jesus the King, obey His word, and actually serve. When we treasure the grace we have received with thanksgiving and are faithful from the small things, the Lord uses that life and entrusts more precious work to it.

[Question] 14. In Luke chapter 19 verse 27, what judgment did the enemies who refused to have the nobleman reign over them receive after he returned?

The enemies who refused to have the nobleman reign over them were brought and slain before the king after he returned, having received the kingdom.

"But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me" (Luke 19:27).

While the nobleman was away, they openly refused him, saying, *"We will not have this man to reign over us."* But their refusal could not prevent his becoming king. He returned, having received the kingdom, and judged the enemies who had rejected him.

This judgment was the result of despising the king's longsuffering and rebelling to the end. The nobleman entrusted work to his servants before he left and settled accounts after he returned, and the citizens also had the time during which he went to receive the kingdom and returned. But even during that period, the enemies did not turn their hearts, and they refused his reign.

The fact that Jesus came to save sinners and the fact that He will judge in the future do not contradict each other. Now is the time to hear and believe the word of salvation of the One who seeks the lost. If a person refuses this grace to the end, he will be judged for his own unbelief before the King who comes again.

The servant who hid the one mina also distorted his master into an austere man and did not obey his command. The parable shows that calling the master with one's mouth is not enough; one must believe in him as king in one's heart and actually serve him. Jesus is the King who saves sinners, and also the King who will come again and judge. Therefore, we must believe His salvation now and obey His kingship.

[Question] 15. In Luke chapter 19 verses 41–44, why did Jesus shed tears as He looked at the city of Jerusalem?

Jesus shed tears because He knew that Jerusalem, failing to realize the time when God visited it and not knowing the things that make for its peace, would suffer terrible judgment and destruction in the future.

"*Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, 'If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For days will come upon you when your enemies*

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will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation.'" (Luke 19:41–44).

Jerusalem was outwardly the center of religion, but it did not recognize Jesus, the Savior God had sent. Some people praised the King who comes in the name of the Lord, but the leaders rejected Jesus and looked for a way to kill Him. As a result, the day was drawing near when enemies would surround the city, dash its children to the ground, and not leave one stone upon another.

The tears of Jesus show His compassion for the souls that would have to be judged. Jesus did not weep because of the suffering He Himself would undergo; He had pity on the people who would perish without knowing the time of salvation. The way for sinners to have peace is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John and taking upon Himself the sin of the world, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead.

"The things that make for your peace" that Jerusalem did not know do not mean merely a state in which there is no war. They are the way for a person who has become an enemy of God because of sin to receive the remission of sin through Jesus the Savior and be reconciled to God. The King of peace came in person, but Jerusalem failed to recognize Him because of its own thoughts and religious obstinacy.

The fact that Jesus wept shows that even within the warning of judgment there is love for souls. Jesus did not declare destruction with delight; He grieved that people were missing the time of salvation. The person who preaches the gospel must also have a heart that pities the souls that will perish rather than

a heart that condemns.

We, too, must not take the perishing of souls lightly, but must pity them with the heart of Jesus. We must first believe the word of salvation ourselves, and preach the gospel so that our families and neighbors do not miss the time of grace when God has visited them.

[Question] 16. What lesson does the conduct of the religious leaders of that day, shown in Luke chapter 19 verses 45–46, give us today?

The conduct of the religious leaders of that day gives us the lesson that we must not make the house of God and its offices a means of protecting our own profit and authority, but must use them to serve prayer, the word, and the gospel.

"Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, saying to them, 'It is written, "My house is a house of prayer," but you have made it a "den of thieves."'" (Luke 19:45–46).

The temple had to be a place where people come to God, pray, hear the word, and seek grace. But the work meant for worship had turned into business for gain, and the religious leaders did not set that wrong right. Jesus drove out those who were doing business and restored the original purpose of the temple.

The greater problem lay in the fact that the leaders, hearing the words of Jesus, did not turn back but plotted to kill Him. Though they held positions of studying and teaching the word, when their authority was shaken they opposed Jesus, the Owner of the word. Even with offices and Bible knowledge, if one does not humble oneself before the word, one can rather block the truth.

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The person entrusted with the work of God must use finances, administration, and offices transparently and rightly. If one makes offerings and service a tool for measuring people's faith, or uses spiritual authority to fill one's own greed, one damages the purpose of the house of God. All material things and organization must help the work of preaching the word and serving souls.

It is not only leaders who must hear this word. The saints, too, must not hide the greed and disobedience of their hearts while relying on the outward form of attending church or on an office. We must hear the words of Jesus as words given to us, and when we realize a wrong, we must repent and set it right in faith.

Today the church and its leaders also must not use material things and offices for their own glory, but must use them for the gospel that saves souls and for serving the saints. The saints likewise must not be satisfied with a religious outward form, but must listen to the words of Jesus and serve God with prayer and faith.

[Question] 17. In Luke chapter 19 verse 46, what do *"a house of prayer"* and *"den of thieves,"* of which Jesus spoke, each mean?

"A house of prayer" means the house of God where people come to Him, worship Him, pray, and seek His word and grace. *"Den of thieves"* refers to the corrupt faith that, without abandoning greed and injustice, hides in a religious outward form and protects its own interests.

"Saying to them, 'It is written, "My house is a house of prayer," but you have made it a "den of thieves."'" (Luke

19:46).

"A house of prayer" is connected with the word in the Book of Isaiah that the house of God will become a house of prayer open to all nations. The temple must be not a place for boasting of one's status and property, but a place where sinners come to God, seek His grace, and obey His will.

"Den of thieves" is connected with the word in the Book of Jeremiah that rebuked the people who did evil and yet considered themselves safe when they entered the temple. Just as a thief hides in a den after doing evil, people harbored greed and injustice and yet thought that religious ceremonies and offices would protect them. Jesus rebuked them for making the temple, where people ought to pray, into a place that hides human greed and profit.

In the house of prayer, God is the center, and people seek His will and obey His word. Worship and prayer are not means of displaying one's own righteousness or fulfilling worldly desires, but acts of faith that offer the heart to God and believe His grace. The door must be open so that anyone may hear the gospel and come to God.

In a temple that has become a den of thieves, people call on the name of God, but in reality human greed and profit are the center. Religious status and ceremony are made a shield to hide sin, burdens are laid on those who seek God, and material things are put ahead of the word. Jesus exposed precisely this false faith and cleansed the temple.

The church must be not a place that gains profit by forcing material things and service on people, but a place that preaches the gospel and serves so that souls may come to God. We, too, must not make worship and prayer a means of achieving our own greed, but must open our hearts before the word and believe in and serve God.

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[Question] 18. In Luke chapter 19 verses 47–48, what were the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people scheming in order to harm Jesus?

The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people were plotting to kill Jesus. But because all the people were listening attentively to His words, they could not find a way to carry it out right away.

"And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him" (Luke 19:47–48).

These men were the leaders who ought to have led the people with the word of God and kept the holiness of the temple. But when Jesus cleansed the temple and taught the word daily, rather than turning back before that word, they tried to remove Him. Even though they realized the rebuke of the word, they opposed the truth to keep their own positions and wills.

Their scheme later became more concrete. Fearing the people, they could not seize Him openly; then, when Judas Iscariot discussed with them a way to betray Jesus, they promised to give him money and looked for a time when no crowd was present.

The fact that the people listened attentively to the words of Jesus stopped the leaders' scheme for a while. They did not abandon their plan out of fear of God; they feared the people's reaction and looked for the time and the method to carry it out. Though they outwardly stopped acting, their heart that hated Jesus and wanted to remove Him remained the same.

This event shows that understanding the word and obeying the word can be different. The leaders noticed that the rebuke of

Jesus was directed at them, but they did not turn back and instead tried to seize Him. When our wrong is exposed as we hear the word, we must not push away the truth, but must admit it before God and correct our heart and conduct.

Even amid their evil scheme, Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John in order to save sinners, went forward willingly on the way of the Cross to receive the judgment for that sin, and completed salvation by rising from the dead. But the fact that they were used in God's plan of salvation does not remove the sin of those who opposed Jesus. When the word exposes our wrong, we must not refuse it to save our own face, but must listen humbly, turn back, and believe in and follow Jesus. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Live your life of faith on God's side

< Luke 19:1-10 >

"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.' Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

The righteousness of man and the righteousness of God

I have finished expounding, from chapter 1 through chapter

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16, the righteousness of God revealed in the Book of Romans—our Lord who is the righteousness of God. When a work is finished, I think of the Lord who said, *"It is finished!"* and it is truly good when a work that was begun is brought to a good conclusion. Since it is good to share together whatever one has done, I share it with you. Because there are parts in the Book of Romans that speak of the whole Bible, if you read it through at least once, it helps you greatly when you hear other words.

Today we read the word of Luke chapter 19. People like to display their own rightness. Whatever they do, they like to make their names known and celebrated. When a broadcast raises funds to help needy neighbors, people do not send much if the station only announces an account number; but when the station turns on the cameras and receives donations in person, they stand in line to bring them. It was the same with the gold-collecting campaign when our country was in difficulty: when people were simply asked to give, little was gathered, but when the broadcast received donations, everyone, without exception, brought their babies' first-birthday rings and birthday rings, and when asked to say a word, each had something to say. In this way people like to display their own righteousness. This is not a story about others; it is the story of you and me as well. We believe in Jesus, yet we too have much of this heart.

God delights in revealing the righteousness of God. God delights in revealing His own righteousness, and man delights in displaying man's own righteousness. But the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man cannot even be compared with each other. Man's righteousness is for oneself, and the righteousness of God is for others, for all mankind. When a person lays down his own righteousness, sees himself even a little as he really is, and comes to know the righteousness of Jesus Christ that God has performed for us and His rightness,

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God gives him salvation. He is the God who clothes with the righteousness of God and with His salvation those who abandon their own righteousness like this and know that it is nothing.

Zacchaeus, who admitted what he was and believed

Looking at the passage: Jesus was passing through Jericho, and in Jericho there was a famous man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, that is, the head of the tax officials, and he was very rich. Hearing the news that Jesus was passing through his town, this man wanted to see Jesus. Zacchaeus had heard many stories about Jesus, and as he heard them he had come to long for Jesus sincerely. But when he heard that Jesus had actually come and went out to look, a great crowd had gathered, and he himself was short. Zacchaeus, a grown man and a chief tax collector, did not stand on his dignity; wanting to see Jesus clearly, he climbed up a sycamore tree at a point along the way and waited. Just then Jesus, passing by, looked up and said, *"Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house" (Luke 19:5)*. Zacchaeus made haste, came down, and received Jesus into his house. Then all the people of the town murmured. There was an uproar that Jesus had entered the house of a sinner, the house of a thief. At that time Zacchaeus said to Jesus, *"Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19:8).*

Zacchaeus was a man who, in his own way, thought himself clever. Under Roman rule, at a time when some people could not even manage three meals a day, Zacchaeus had become a henchman of Rome, collecting taxes to hand over while taking

his own share as well, living richly, and he had the thought that he was better than others. Zacchaeus's statement that he would repay fourfold brings to mind the principle of restitution in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, actual restitution was required according to the offense, and in the case of the trespass offering, one was required to repay the principal amount and add one-fifth to it. it did not end with the heart but had to be repaid with material things. Zacchaeus saying this to Jesus meant that he admitted what he was, just as he was. It was the confession, 'I am a thief. I thought I was better than those people, but now that I have met You, I am really no better. When I saw myself before You who are God, I found that I am nothing.'

In one way this can look like putting forward his own righteousness, but if you look at the context before and after, Zacchaeus did not say this to put forward his own righteousness; rather, having met Jesus, he came to know that his own righteousness was nothing. Their eyes had only met, yet Jesus knew everything about Zacchaeus and went into his house on purpose. In the region of Jericho in those days, the name Zacchaeus meant a man at whom people pointed their fingers.

To people's eyes he may have looked haughty, but when Jesus Christ looked at Zacchaeus, in his heart there was, more than any putting forward of his own righteousness, a heart that truly sought God and waited for the Savior. That is why, as soon as Jesus saw Zacchaeus, He told him to come down, saying that He must stay at his house that day. Braving the reproach of many people, Jesus Christ entered the house of Zacchaeus and met him, and immediately Zacchaeus threw away all his own greatness. He realized his wrongs and said he would repay them just as they were. Jesus said to Zacchaeus, *"Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9)*, and said, *"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which*

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was lost" (Luke 19:10). Zacchaeus knew and believed who Jesus Christ was; he honestly admitted what he was and believed the word of God.

Acknowledge the exaltedness of Jesus Christ

Today people—even people who believe in Jesus, even people who know the righteousness of God, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and have received the remission of sin in their hearts—often try to exalt their own righteousness rather than exalting the righteousness of God. But God hates that. However much human righteousness there may be, can it be compared with the righteousness of God? To save us, God gave us His own body and blood without any price; He took upon Himself all our sins with the baptism He received from John; He gave us new life and glory; and He remitted all our sins so as to give us even the kingdom of God the Father, which He could have enjoyed alone. But what about our righteousness? Our righteousness has conditions and many reasons. Even if we weighed the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man on a scale, they could not even be compared.

In the Book of Daniel, too, we see that a king held a banquet and brought the vessels of silver and gold with which sacrifices had been offered to God in the temple of Israel, and poured wine into those vessels and drank. Then a hand appeared and wrote on the wall, and when no one could understand its meaning, Daniel interpreted it. It meant that the king had been weighed in the balances and found wanting. The king had invaded another country, seized the vessels used in serving God, poured wine into them and drank with his high officials, boasting loudly that he was the king who ruled the world; but when it was weighed

in the balances whether he could be acknowledged before God by his own rightness and ability, he fell utterly short.

The human righteousness that all mankind puts forward before God is nothing. God, by His own righteousness alone, by His own rightness, remitted our sins, poured new life into us and made us God's children, and clothed us with the glory of the kingdom of heaven and let us enjoy it. This is precisely the righteousness of God. God wanted to do anything and everything for us with His rightness, His power, His love, and His blessing, and He has done it; He wanted to reveal it, and He wanted people to give thanks for it.

But the people who were there, all except Zacchaeus, boasted of their own righteousness before Jesus: I am a decent person; my conduct is upright and I keep the Law well. Of course, this does not mean that Zacchaeus did well. Yet the one thing Zacchaeus did well before God was that he did not put forward his own righteousness. He was a man who confessed that before the righteousness of God his own righteousness was nothing, that when he met Jesus and discovered the righteousness of Jesus Christ he had to throw all his own righteousness away, and that he had so many wrongs and shortcomings. So Zacchaeus was acknowledged for his faith. Jesus said, *"He also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

The Lord who saved you and me from all sins did not save us because our righteousness was great and our rightness abundant. As with Zacchaeus, it is because our rightness is worthless: even if, comparing man with man, we have some measure of rightness, He clothed with salvation the person who rightly knows, upon meeting Jesus Christ, that his own righteousness is nothing. Even after we receive the remission of sin, even the born-again must have their own righteousness broken more and more as the days go by; we must admit that if

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we do not serve the Lord we are worse than before we were born again; and we must believe in, exalt, and give thanks for the righteousness of God. We are glad and happy that our Lord has removed our sins. But even after receiving the remission of sin, compared with the righteousness of God we have nothing to boast of; rather, we have nothing to do but give thanks before the righteousness of God and exalt that righteousness. We believe that following that righteousness by faith and boasting of that righteousness to many people is the most fitting thing.

Zacchaeus came down from the sycamore tree and said to Jesus, *"I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."* Then what happens? From that day Zacchaeus is a beggar. Once he empties out his property and makes restitution, nothing remains to him. He has no property of his own, no rightness, nothing at all. Yet he did this not because he was foolish, but because he believed God. Having met Jesus Christ and learned that he himself was nothing, he confessed it honestly and acknowledged the exaltedness of Jesus Christ. You and I also must know and discover the exaltedness of Jesus Christ. He is the One who has righteousness that cannot be compared with ours, the One who has love and power and glory; only when we know such a Jesus rightly can we believe in Him well, and exalt the righteousness of God until the day the Lord comes.

The years of one's faith

We have no humanly differentiated standard, but there is this. There are those who met the Lord first, who in the Lord heard the word and believed and abandoned their own righteousness, and who, though lacking in many situations, have received the

Lord's guidance and followed—there is such a thing as the years of faith. One's years in the faith must never be disregarded. There is the word that the first will be last and the last first, but that is for God to see and judge; the years of faith must not be taken lightly. Hearing the word for a long time in God's Church and serving and following the Lord does not happen in a day. Until one becomes so, one has believed in the righteousness of God, abandoned one's own righteousness, known one's own lack, acknowledged the exaltedness of God, and followed—and that is why one stands in the faith to this day; it is worthy of respect. The Bible says that the young should rise up before the gray head and honor the old man. It is not boasting about being old; the years of faith are something worthy of respect.

Those whose years of faith are not yet many have also gone through many things in their life of faith until now. Through them they have grown, and by the faith that believes in the righteousness of God, by God's love and grace, they stand in the faith to this day. This is by no means a light thing; it is truly worthy of respect. When people receive the remission of sin and come to know the word of God a little, they become full of their own righteousness and try to put it forward in everything. Young believers do that. But the person whose years of faith are deep and who truly exalts the righteousness of God delights in preaching the righteousness of God rather than boasting of his own, delights in exalting the righteousness of God, gives thanks for living for it, and delights in a life that participates in the glory of God. The person young in faith delights in displaying his own righteousness, but the person grown in faith delights in the rightness of God. He delights in preaching it, in believing it, and in having been saved by the righteousness of God. The level is different. That is why those deep in the years of faith are people to be respected.

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Live a life of faith that exalts the righteousness of God

There are people who live their life of faith for themselves, and there are people who live their life of faith to exalt the righteousness of God. Among those who have received the remission of sin, the person who lives his life of faith to exalt the righteousness of God has come to be on God's side. Even among saints who have alike believed in the righteousness of God and received the remission of sin, one person puts forward his own righteousness, while another, because his own rightness is nothing before God, clings to the righteousness of God and delights only in revealing and serving the righteousness of God. The dimension is different. Our church, counting even the children, comes to only about three hundred people, yet it works with the whole world as its field. Why is that? It is because they are people who know that the righteousness of God is far higher than our righteousness, who know that when anyone believes in this righteousness he receives the remission of sin and blessing, who know that preaching it is a work worth serving, and who give their bodies to that work. To such people, though their number is small, God entrusts many works. It is because they do not try to display their own righteousness and do not live for their own righteousness.

Whether we do well or poorly, we are Christ's; whether we live or die, we are Christ's. After we are born again, for whom and for what do we live? We live for God and for the righteousness of God. That means preaching the righteousness of God, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to save all people from sin. We do it while suffering hardship for it. Everyone in his own appointed place finds it hard. It is not that only one person has it hard and another does not. It is hard for everyone,

but we do our best and live to exalt the righteousness of God.

Even if we display some righteousness before God, according to the word, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)*, we did it in God, and there is nothing we have done by our own ability. We believe that God gave us the ability to do it, and that He will give us the ability to do it in the future as well. But if we credit even that work to our own rightness and boast, all our labor becomes vain. Why? Because He said, *"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. God has given us the remission of sin, made us His people, made us servants of righteousness, blessed us, and given us everything—sunlight and air, material things and thoughts, grace and the Church and the word; so if we get carried away and boast as if we had done something great, that is the first thing God hates. Did you do it with what was yours? You did it with what was Mine—He says.

In fact, the more I serve the Lord, the more my own righteousness is broken. I am not putting on humility; to speak honestly, there is nothing great about me. But Jesus Christ is so perfect—His righteousness is complete rightness, a love beyond all words, salvation, and power. And because His plan is right and I am no match for Him at all, because God alone is right and exalted, I serve Him, reveal Him, and boast of Him. Is there anything great about me because I preach before you? Nothing at all. I met the Lord, and because the Lord told me to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and because there was no one preaching this gospel to the whole world, I preach it. In my exposition of Romans I also criticized theologians, but that was not to display my own greatness; I refuted them because they challenge God, because their claims are absurd when compared with God—not to display my own

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rightness. In any case, God is so great and perfect, and the grace He has bestowed is so great and such complete goodness, that I cannot help boasting of Him, cannot help serving Him, cannot help exalting Him, and cannot help praising Him. I praise the righteousness of God.

There is a saying about acorns measuring their heights against one another. If you go to the hills in autumn, acorns lie scattered everywhere, and even if one from a big tree is a little bigger, when you measure them none differs by two or three times. That is why we speak of acorns measuring their heights. Those who truly believe in and serve the righteousness of God and, though lacking, exalt Him with years of mature faith and take up that work are honorable people; but if, setting such faith aside, human beings compare only the fleshly rightness among themselves, no one is special. As human beings who alike go to the toilet and relieve themselves, we are the same in every way.

God delights in the person who exalts the righteousness of God, the person who, as he comes to know the righteousness of God, honestly confesses that God alone is right. The Jesus whom Zacchaeus met, according to historians, was not much to look at in appearance. But when Zacchaeus listened to His words, He not only knew everything about Zacchaeus; He was the very Savior he had been waiting for. According to the word, *"He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*, He was the Messiah he had been waiting for all along. After Zacchaeus believed in Jesus, he threw away all his own righteousness. He admitted all his wrongs, and he no longer went on living richly by collecting taxes and filling his own pockets. Since he said he would repay fourfold, his property was already gone, and he would have given up his work as chief tax collector as well.

God is truly righteous and exalted; He knows everything about us; and even though we have no rightness to put forward,

He is the God of love and the God of salvation who saved us from sin and made us God's people. The nearer the day of the Lord's coming draws, the more the righteousness of God alone is renewed within your soul and mine and becomes our thanksgiving. Even if you have no righteousness of your own to put forward, do not lose heart. Did Zacchaeus keep on exploiting and living richly because he had received the remission of sin? No. When you meet the Lord, the Lord gives you new works to do. According to the word, *"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)*, we live newly. By believing in the righteousness of God we have become new people. We believe in God and give thanks, and we give thanks that we have become the children of God. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Admit that you are a sinner

< Luke 19:1-10 >

"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.' Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

God loved us human beings and came to visit this earth. Our God abandoned the glorious throne of heaven and came to find you and me, to save us from sin and make us God's people; He gave us everlasting life and life itself, gave us the remission of sin, gave us every spiritual blessing in heaven and every rich blessing on earth, and took upon Himself all the diseases and

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infirmities of our flesh.

Today is the first day of this meeting. God has allowed this meeting in the last days of the world, and many of you have come for the first time. Now is truly the time to awake out of sleep, the time to be born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sin. All over the world many souls are receiving the remission of sin, and they come out to meetings to hear the word. Since God so loves us human beings that He has opened this meeting, we can know that our God loves people even now.

The whole world is passing through an age of confusion. Diseases spread and famines strike, and things look dark. It is not only our country that is going through an economic crisis; Asia and Europe are also in crisis, and the whole global village has passed autumn and entered winter, as it were. Yet I know that the Lord has allowed meetings like this in order to have souls born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the day He comes.

Among the blessings God gives, the greatest blessing is the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit. Through this gospel we receive the remission of sin and become righteous, and we obtain everlasting life before God and receive many blessings. Until the day the Lord comes, we will preach this gospel.

I truly give thanks that He has allowed this meeting to save so many souls. This evening, too, I will open the word of God and preach what God says: how we are born again, what conditions are needed to be born again, and what word it is that makes us born again. If you keep hearing the word from this evening until the evening of the day after tomorrow, you will come to know that this is exactly what Jesus meant when He told Nicodemus that one must be born again of water and the Spirit.

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If your soul is born again as you hear this word, I believe that at this meeting you will attain the purpose for which you have believed in Jesus until now.

Zacchaeus, who climbed up the sycamore tree

In today's passage Zacchaeus appears. Zacchaeus was really short. He was smaller than ordinary people; even if he stood on a brick and raised his heels, he could hardly see. Hearing the rumor that Jesus was passing through his town, Zacchaeus climbed up a sycamore tree. Seeing that the sycamore tree did not break, he seems to have been a light, very small man. At any rate, this Zacchaeus is the main character of today.

Jesus entered the region of Jericho where Zacchaeus lived. This Jericho was the first city the people of Israel confronted when they entered the land of Canaan. It was a great and strong city with double walls, so wide that a big truck could run along the top of the walls. Joshua and God's people and the priests marched around it once a day until the sixth day; on the seventh day they marched around it seven times, and when the priests blew the trumpets and the people shouted with a great shout, the walls collapsed, and the people of Israel went into the city and took it.

The name Jericho means fragrance, and it refers to the world. The world is a fragrance. Because God made this world, the world is a very beautiful and blessed place. If the people of the world did not defile it with sin or pour out polluting substances, this world would be a place of fragrance. The passage says that our Lord entered Jericho. Our Lord came from the kingdom of heaven to this earth to save you and me, the lost.

In the city of Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus. He

was a chief tax collector and a rich man. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being short and the crowd being large, he could not, so he climbed up a sycamore tree. It was because, at the rumor that Jesus was coming to his town, both sides of the road were packed with a sea of people. Jesus came to this world truly to seek and to save the lost. Zacchaeus climbed the sycamore tree partly because he was short, but also because his heart that longed for Jesus and wanted to see Him was that earnest.

The person who wants to meet God meets our Lord

We can see that this Zacchaeus was a soul lost before God. Before God, you and I are all lost souls. Long ago we lived in Eden, the special garden God had made. But Satan the Devil, the serpent, first tempted Eve, and had Adam also eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man fell to Satan's temptation and was driven out of the Garden of Eden. So man was originally one of the people of God's kingdom, but became a being driven out of that kingdom, a lost one. Jesus came to find exactly such people.

Now Zacchaeus had climbed up the sycamore tree and was waiting for Jesus. We can see that Zacchaeus was a man who knew who Jesus was and whose desire to meet Him was uncommonly earnest. He climbed the sycamore tree not merely because he was short, but because his longing to meet Jesus was greater than other people's. Today among you and me as well, there are souls who are not people who merely offer the forms of worship, but who really want to meet God, want to receive the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit, want to become righteous, want to receive the remission of sin, want to

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receive the Holy Spirit, and earnestly want to see the Lord whenever He comes. Zacchaeus was one of such people.

Zacchaeus was one lost soul who sought God, who truly and earnestly wanted to meet Jesus. You and I must also have such a heart to meet Jesus Christ. We must have, not a heart that says it does not matter whether we attend church or not, but a heart that says: as long as I attend church, I will surely meet Jesus Christ. In the Bible our Lord told Nicodemus that only if one is born again of water and the Spirit can one see the kingdom of God and enter that kingdom. Today's passage teaches us that the person who cherishes the wish—I too will surely be born again of water and the Spirit—and who, though truly lost before God, wants to meet God, comes to meet our Lord.

You and I must also attend this meeting with the same heart as Zacchaeus. If we do, just as Jesus met Zacchaeus, entered his house, and blessed him, saying that this man also was a son of Abraham, I believe that you too will surely receive this blessing. I want God to give you that blessing.

Zacchaeus, who confessed that he was a sinner

Zacchaeus climbed up the sycamore tree like a squirrel. As we run on a playground, so a squirrel climbs a tree. While Zacchaeus was up in the sycamore tree, Jesus happened to be passing beneath it. As Zacchaeus was looking closely at Jesus, Jesus, right under the sycamore tree, looked up and said, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house. Zacchaeus was so glad that he made haste and came down, received Jesus with joy, and Jesus entered the house of Zacchaeus and stayed there.

And Zacchaeus said this before Jesus: *"Look, Lord, I give*

half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19:8). Zacchaeus was a sinner. As he received Jesus into his house, he received Him knowing the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior—not an ordinary man but God Himself. His saying that he would give half of his goods to the poor was the confession: I am a sinner; I am a lump of sin; I am a man who has extorted much; I handed a little up to my superiors and pocketed much myself; I am not just a thief, I am a thief on a national scale. And since he said that if, among his remaining possessions, there was anything he had extorted from others, he would repay it with four times more, Zacchaeus resolved of his own accord to become a penniless beggar.

But our Lord said, *"Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:9–10)*. Zacchaeus wanted to meet Jesus; he said he would distribute half of his property to the poor, and that if he had extorted anything he would repay it fourfold.

The person who can be born again of water and the Spirit before the Lord is the person who knows what kind of sinner he is. Only such a person can know Jesus accurately, welcome Him sincerely, and receive Him into his heart. Our God gives such a person the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit; even if he loses the things of the earth, God gives him all the more the everlasting things of heaven, and He also adds earthly blessings several times more than what Zacchaeus had before. If you read only this passage, it looks as if Zacchaeus became a penniless beggar, but in reality it was not so.

Among those who believed God and were acknowledged for their faith, there is no poor man. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all lived richly and well. It is never God's will that one should

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believe in Jesus and become poor. In our church, too, there is not one person who has been ruined because he believed in Jesus. If anything, people have become richer; no one has gone wrong. God is the One who blesses not only spiritually but also physically. Therefore, what we must focus on is the confession of Zacchaeus. We must come to have the same heart as Zacchaeus.

We have read Luke chapter 19, and in chapter 18, the previous chapter, there is a word that runs in the same vein. When Jesus was passing through the region of Jericho, among all those crowds of people packed like a sea, the person who received the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit was Zacchaeus alone. All those many people were mere attendants. An attendant is one who sets off the bride, the main character. The Jews wrapped themselves in cloth for clothing, and some would have come out with it well pressed and neatly dressed, and some would have come out dressed in their best clothes. But among them, the one who met Jesus was one man, Zacchaeus.

Then we must focus on how Zacchaeus was able to meet Jesus and receive this blessing. Your faith and mine must also be focused here. Being born again of water and the Spirit is everything. It is not that one has been born again of the Spirit but not of water, or born again of water but cannot speak in tongues. When one is born again of water and the Spirit, that is complete.

How is one born again? What kind of person is born again? What kind of person does the Lord meet? Whose house does He enter? To what kind of person does He say, a son of Abraham? Are you Zacchaeus, or an attendant? You must examine yourselves to see whether you want to be an attendant or Zacchaeus. This does not mean wanting to become short in body like Zacchaeus; you must have the heart that wants to become

Zacchaeus spiritually. Only then does our Lord meet you. With the heart of a mere attendant you cannot meet the Lord.

A worship service is usually an hour, so thoughts like—I only need to spend this hour well; I only need to sing the praises well and clap well and go—such a heart will not do. It must be thrown away. We must have the same heart as Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus knew that he was a sinner. When Jesus came to his house, he said he would cut off half of his property and give it to the poor: when the holy Lord came in, his heart was pricked and he confessed. Yet did Zacchaeus become a complete beggar? He did not.

The person who knows how many his sins are meets the Lord

Among those who believe in Jesus in this world there are several kinds of people. First, there are the pietists. They are people who think that a believer in Jesus must live in honest poverty, very poor, and must not live rich—that to believe in Jesus is to live poor. Such people are afraid of becoming rich after believing in Jesus, as if it were committing a great sin. Such a person will hardly become rich all his life.

Such a person fasts and prays once every three days and shares food with others, yet always despises others: ‘How can that man believe in Jesus? One should share as I do, eat not even a bowl of gruel in three days, grow pale and thin like a plant in the shade, and pray in a feeble voice—only then can one be called spiritual.’ It is that way of thinking. It is not so these days, but in the old days there was a time when a skinny shepherd was more popular than a sleek, well-fed pastor. Then, after a denomination came in that said believing in Jesus brings rice and

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briquettes, people also came to like those who put on flesh and had a paunch.

A person who despises and belittles others, saying—I hardly eat or spend and I help others, but that man spends only on himself—is called a Pharisee. Let us look at verse 9 of Luke chapter 18, the chapter right before.

"Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'" (Luke 18:9–14).

This Pharisee said that he fasted and prayed twice a week before God. Can you fast and pray like that? If we skip even one meal, we have no strength. This Pharisee was truly a formidable man. Saying—I fast twice a week, I do not commit adultery, and I am not like this tax collector either—he pointed at the man beside him with his head held high: I am not like this bad man who steals, does injustice, and commits adultery.

But the tax collector was not so. How much sin must the tax collector have had? He was a man whose sin was exposed. But our Lord said that where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, and He said, *"I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."* Therefore, the person who knows how much sin he has meets the Lord. I want you also to know how much sin you have right now. What you have done until now is not important. If

you truly want to receive the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit, you must know how many your sins are.

The tax collector could not even look up to heaven. Not daring to lift his face, with his face bowed down, he beat his breast and said, *"God, be merciful to me a sinner!"* He did not lay out this or that circumstance in detail; he only said that he was a sinner. Setting these two men side by side, our Lord said that this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. We must know that our Lord looks at whether there is sin in the heart or not—that is, He looks at the center of the heart. Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the center of the heart. Man calls it adultery only when the act of adultery is committed, but God said that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery. God looks at the center of the heart and says what kind of person that person is.

Therefore we must examine whether I am really Zacchaeus or not. When Zacchaeus said, I will give half of my possessions to the poor, it meant that since how he had lived had been clearly exposed, with a repentant heart he would sell half of his property and give it. That is, it was the confession: before God I am a lump of sin; I am a man bound for hell; therefore I need You; since You have met me and entered my house, I confess myself: I am a man bound for hell.

You and I believe in Jesus. When God looks at our hearts and lives, would we be attendants before God, or people like that Pharisee who considered himself righteous? In God's sight, would we be lumps of sin, sinners bound for hell? If we are people who have not yet been born again of water and the Spirit, are we sinners or righteous before God? We are sinners. On the premise that we have not been born again of water and the Spirit,

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if God looks at the center of our heart, our soul, our thoughts, our deeds, and our life, we are sinners. We are sinners, and no other word is needed. The person who honestly admits that fact before God receives the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit and meets our Lord.

When you are with people you seem to believe in Jesus, but when no one is around, is there a time when you realize that your heart is empty and hollow—that Jesus is not there, His word is not there, and there is no faith believing anything? When you sing praises and clap your hands, you really seem to believe in Jesus; but on a day when the rain pours down, when you look out the window and look into your own heart, is there faith in that heart? What word are you holding on to, and what word comes to mind? Have you ever looked at yourself with no word rising up, your heart confused and hollow and empty? You must know your own self: when you look at yourself, you are every kind of lump of sin; you hush things up and hide in shame before God and men; even if you move from this town to that town you are afraid of meeting someone who knows you; and in the new town you sin again and are ashamed to face those people. We must know what kind of people we are and what our real state is, and ask our Lord to give us the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit.

The twelve sins that come out of the heart

Let us see what kind of people we ourselves are through Mark chapter 7, from verse 20 to verse 23: *"And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an*

evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'" Our Jesus said that what comes out of a man is what defiles the man. That is, the sins that come out of a man's heart defile the man.

Then let us see what sins come out of a man's heart. First, evil thoughts come out. If the thoughts are evil, the deeds become evil. There is a debate about which comes first, the hen or the chick; but since God had to create each thing according to its kind, He created the hen from the beginning, so in God's sight the hen comes first. If we ask which comes first, a man's heart or his deeds, the heart comes first. If a man's heart is dirty and evil, that man inevitably does dirty and evil deeds. The person who at least tries not to sin and tries to have a good heart sins fewer times and sins in secret, but the person who sins openly commits sin like an occupation.

Jesus said that the things that come out of a man's heart are evil. We are human beings. When someone's conduct is excessively evil, we say he is worse than a beast; even a beast loves its own young so much, yet there are people worse than beasts. A man, even while eating, will give what he is eating to his child if the child asks, yet in his heart all kinds of sins are still contained.

Since there are evil thoughts in a man's heart, evil thoughts are also sin. Fornication also refers to a state of the heart. It does not mean one has acted; harboring lewdness in the heart is itself the sin of fornication. The heart that steals, the heart that murders, the heart that commits adultery, the heart that covets, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness—are these hearts inside your heart, or not? They are. Are they in the heart of every person living on this earth, or not? They are. Jesus said they are.

Man is born with the heart of these twelve sins. Born with

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that heart, he commits those sins when the time comes. Today this sin, tomorrow that sin—he sins according to the season. The problem is that man lives without even knowing that he commits these sins, not even knowing the fact that he is such a sinner. Thinking that one is not a sinner because one has not done these deeds outwardly—that is precisely being blind before God, the shameful state of not yet being born again. Socrates said, Know yourself, and our Lord also said to the Pharisees, Know yourself.

Inside the heart of the Pharisee, too, these twelve sins existed. Evil thoughts—fornication, theft, murder, adultery, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness—all these sins were lumped together in him. Yet this man did not know his own state; looking only at his deeds, he considered that he was living well according to God's will, and asked overbearingly, What shall I do to inherit eternal life?

When we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the sins of the heart are washed away and we receive the remission of sin

So Jesus told a story. A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. Jericho means the world, the fragrance, and Jerusalem, the city of religion, refers to those who believe in God. As the man was going down to Jericho he met thieves, and the thieves beat him, stripped him of his clothes, and left him half dead. Just then a priest was going down that road, saw the man who was almost dead, and passed by on the other side; a Levite also saw him and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, coming down, had compassion on this man; he poured wine and oil on his wounds and bandaged

them, took him to an inn and cared for him, gave the innkeeper money, asked him to take good care of him, and said that if it cost more, he would repay when he returned, and went his way.

When Jesus asked which of these three was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves, the answer was, He who showed mercy on him. Jesus said, Go and do likewise, and you will inherit eternal life. Jesus was comparing the Pharisee to that priest and that Levite. That is: you speak smoothly and sit in a high seat without lifting a finger, harassing people with do this and do that, but when you actually meet a man who is almost dead, you are a person who avoids him and runs away. Jesus did not say it in those very words, but that is the meaning of the parable. The Levite was also a man who believed God well, yet he saw and passed by on the other side—you are such a person, He meant.

Can we make our conduct upright? Can we live fully according to the word of God? We cannot. As you attend church, some deacon or pastor may look very good and seem to live well. But would God say that such a person has none of the twelve sins? He says they are there. That is why Jesus said to the Pharisees that they were hypocrites. He called them hypocrites and whitewashed tombs. When a corpse is buried and covered with earth, and the top is plastered smooth with lime, not a blade of grass grows on that tomb and the outside is sleek, but inside the corpse is rotting. However upright your conduct may look before people, your heart is full of hypocrisy and filth. You sin in secret and deceive God, deceive yourself, deceive people, and deceive the congregation—so He said.

A religion that washes only the outside like this cannot wash away the sins of the heart. Those twelve sins that come out of the heart are never washed away by fasting, tithes, and upright conduct. They are washed away only by believing what Jesus

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has accomplished. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus took upon His own body the sin of this world—all the sins that come out of our hearts; bearing those sins, He received the judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross and died, and He rose again on the third day and became our Savior. When we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the sins of the heart are washed away and we receive the remission of sin.

Not long ago a renowned Buddhist monk passed away. In Buddhist circles, both people of our country and foreigners called him a living Buddha. For ten years he had practiced asceticism facing a wall, shutting himself in a narrow room and receiving his meals through a small window. So people called him a living Buddha, adored and revered him, and even said he was better than the Buddha of old.

But among the writings he left as he departed this world, there was a saying: I have deceived countless men and women. People called him a living Buddha, but he himself confessed how many lewd thoughts had arisen in his heart. It is exactly as Jesus said, that in man's heart there are fornication and lewdness. To others, the sight of him sitting in ascetic practice may have looked sublime, but in his heart lewd thoughts arose and wandered here and there before he came to himself again. So he left the words that he had deceived countless men and women, said that he feared falling into a bottomless and endless hell, and departed this world.

That man came to know himself in the course of his ascetic practice. What made him different from ordinary people is that he knew precisely that there was a lump of sin in his heart and that when he died he would go to hell.

God is the Creator who made you and me. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and when He said, Let there be light, there was light. Do you know who that God is?

Jesus Christ, who put on a human body and came to this earth to save us—He is the God who made this universe and you and me. The Bible says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14); "the world was made through Him" (John 1:10); "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:11–12). God made us, but Satan the Devil tempted us into sin, and thereby caused us to be driven out of the Garden of Eden. Thus in God's sight we became the lost. Man was originally a child of God made in God's image, but became the lost. So God put on a human body and came to this earth to find us.

He came to find them, but because there were many who did not know that they were lost and sinners, Jesus came to this earth and said, *"And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.'" (Mark 7:20–23).* Do you believe? We truly believe.

The one who admits that he is a sinner receives the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit

Do you believe that you and I are exactly such people? Even if others call me good and say I live really uprightly, before God we really are such people. We have such hearts and sins, and in our deeds also we live committing such sins all our lives. The person who confesses and admits this—such a person is the one like Zacchaeus. Our Lord meets such a person. We must admit this.

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Saying, I will sell half of my possessions and give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything I will repay it with four times more—these words were a confession that laid bare the state of his own heart. It was saying, "I am a man bound for hell; I am one whole lump of sin. And yet You are entering my house? I am a lump of sin utterly unable to receive You." Our Lord speaks to real sinners. He said, *"I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."* That is, the Lord calls the sinner, takes that sinner's sins upon His own body by receiving baptism from John, receives the judgment in his place by shedding His blood on the Cross, dies, and rises again; He washes those sins clean away with the water and makes him born again of the Spirit so that he lives as one of God's people, and He makes him a child of God and a righteous person and blesses him. Therefore we must believe this gospel.

And we must admit ourselves before God. Whether I have believed in Jesus for one year, five years, or twenty years, if I am a person who admits that I cannot but commit such sins in the future as well, and who acknowledges the word of God that the wages of sin is death, our Lord meets such a person.

The wages of sin is death, and the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ is eternal life in our Lord. Since the wages of sin is death, if there is sin, there is hell. The twelve sins are in the heart, and just as flowers bloom in spring, fruit sets in summer, and autumn grows abundant, they bear the fruit of deeds in their season. Our Lord compared man to a tree, saying that a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit. If you and I are trees, we must settle clearly whether we are good trees or bad trees. Are we good trees or bad trees? If we are bad trees, it may be all right while they are young, but when they grow they will surely bear bad fruit. In man's heart there are evil thoughts, the heart that murders, the heart that steals, the lewd heart, the licentious heart,

the blaspheming heart, the proud heart—such lumps of sin; what deeds can come out of this? Evil deeds, fraud, deceit, envy, violence, strife, pride, and foolishness come out.

A woman goes to the market, and if her child cries and will not follow, that pretty face contorts fiercely in an instant, and she handles the child roughly and shouts. It is because there is foolishness in the human heart. And is it not so with men? Usually a man is like a gentleman, but when the drink rises, or his pride is hurt and things do not go his way, he raises a commotion loud enough to disturb the whole neighborhood, snaps even at those who try to stop him, asking what business it is of theirs, and treats his wife harshly.

Every person is the same. Only the person born again of water and the Spirit is a person who has received the remission of sin. The person not born again of water and the Spirit is not a person who has received the remission of sin. In the Bible, too, there were many Pharisees who believed in Jesus, but they were attendants, and among them those who received the remission of sin were few enough to count on one's fingers. You must know that those not born again of water and the Spirit stood as attendants. What matters is whether you admit that you yourself are such a person or not. We ourselves are exactly such people.

One is not righteous before God by making one's conduct upright; the heart must first receive the remission of sin. He said that God looks first at the center of the heart; therefore the center of the heart must first be healed. Our Lord said, First cleanse the inside, and then the outside will also be clean. It means: first receive the remission of sin; be born again of water and the Spirit. He will give the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit, so receive it. To receive that blessing, you must know that you are a sinner through and through. Only when you know yourself as such do you climb the sycamore tree and wait for the

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Lord to come. Those standing as attendants think it is enough just to catch a glimpse of Jesus, but I—if I do not meet Jesus, I go to hell and my heart is in such anguish that I cannot live. When we meet Jesus we obtain peace.

I must meet Jesus to solve the problem of my sins. I must receive the blessing of being born again of the water and the Spirit of Jesus. If I do not receive it, I go to hell. Even if I believe in Jesus, if there is sin in my heart, I go to hell. If Jesus were to come at this very hour, I could not but go to hell. To the person whose heart is prepared like this, our Lord gives the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit.

Therefore, to receive the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit, you must admit that you yourself are exactly as this word says. It is confessing: Lord, there is such a heart inside my heart; I have lived doing such deeds and will do so in the future; I do not mean to do it on purpose, but when I get irritated I commit all kinds of sins. For us to be born again of water and the Spirit, we must offer ourselves before God. Admitting what we are, admitting that we are sinners, admitting the fact that we are bound for hell, we must long to be born again of water and the Spirit and hear the word with such a heart.

Now I intend to close. The field of your heart and mine must be plowed. When a farmer farms, he does not simply sow seed on ground overgrown with weeds after the winter has passed. He plows that field over with a plow, pulls out the stones inside, and softens the hard ground. After plowing it all over, he digs furrows, sows the seed, and covers it. Then the rain falls and sprouts come up, and they become lettuce, cabbage, radishes, and flowers. The old field of your heart must be plowed over. Whether you really are such a person or not—you must not say so only in your head, but truly look back at yourself before God and admit: I am truly such a person.

I know there may also be someone who says: I have lived well until today, so I am not sure; I will have to think about it. Then think deeply. Have you really lived righteously before God? Are you confident that you will live righteously in the future? Can you enter the kingdom of God without being born again of water and the Spirit? Jesus said that unless one is born of water and the Spirit, one can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God. Only when we are born again of water and the Spirit can we enter the kingdom of God and see the Father. Therefore we must be born again of water and the Spirit, and for that, the field of your heart must be plowed over.

Dear fellow believers, the person who has not been born again of water and the Spirit cannot but have sin in his heart. Turn your heart completely over and look. Are there sins hidden away in your heart? Are sins swarming in your heart? They are. Admitting that is precisely becoming Zacchaeus. When Zacchaeus said, I will give half of my possessions to the poor, it was the confession: even I myself am not wholly my own. The person who honestly admits and confesses himself like this receives the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit before God.

Is a man a gentleman just because his outside is sleek? Only when there is no sin in the heart is he a gentleman. Is a person whose heart is full of evil thoughts and who harbors fornication, murder, and theft a human being or a beast? He is not even a beast—he is a sinner worse than a beast.

Dear fellow believers, if you were to die this very evening, would you go to hell or to heaven? If you have not now been born again of water and the Spirit, you go to hell. Pray that you may be able to hear the word tomorrow evening as well. You must pass this night safely and do well until tomorrow evening. Every evening I will preach the gospel. When you hear the

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gospel, a bright light will come on in your heart and it will be swept clean. The Holy Spirit will come upon your heart, and it will be filled with joy through the word of God. It will be your first experience of such fullness since believing in Jesus.

Dear fellow believers, are you sinners or righteous? If you have not been born again of water and the Spirit, are you sinners or righteous? You are sinners. The sinner is precisely Zacchaeus. The person like Zacchaeus receives blessing before God. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Who is Jesus?

< Luke 19:1-10 >

"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.' Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

Zacchaeus, who recognized who Jesus was

Because of the heart that wanted to find out who Jesus was, Zacchaeus caught the Lord's eye and received the remission of sin. Jesus was entering Jericho, and in that town there was a very famous man—the chief tax collector. A chief tax collector, in

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today's terms, is the head of a tax office. This man was enormously rich. In the old days as now, those who work at the tax office handle much money and are wealthy.

Zacchaeus climbed up a sycamore tree, seeking to see who Jesus was. He concentrated his interest on that one thing: knowing who Jesus was. He wanted to see Jesus, but the crowd was large and he was short, so he ran ahead and climbed the sycamore tree. A sycamore, when it grows large, becomes quite a massive tree. Up in that tree he waited for Jesus to pass along that road, watching closely. He had already heard many rumors, and now he was to see Him in person. How much could he have seen in that short time? Yet Zacchaeus could be saved because he recognized Jesus rightly.

Jesus is God and the Savior

When we look at people, some look only at the outward appearance. Some look at self-importance or worldly honors. The point of view differs from person to person like this, and the eye with which one sees people is truly important. Some people are full of bluster. If you watch quietly, they stiffen their bodies, their necks, and their eyes, striving to show that they are somebody. But such people are in fact nothing. Look inside, and they have nothing and know nothing.

The person who is truly substantial inside—who has self-respect and knows his own worth—does not parade his greatness outwardly. Rather, he is indifferent to how others see him. Jesus was exactly so. Jesus is the Creator and God; He came as our Savior, and He is the One who made all things in this universe. Being the Almighty, there is nothing He cannot do.

He came to this earth for a while in a human body solely to

save human beings, and now He was passing through the region of Jericho where Zacchaeus lived. It seems He was on His way to another place. Jesus did not deliberately show Himself off, saying, I am a high person; I am a great man; I am God. Jesus is simply Jesus. He is simply God and the Savior. Whether others recognized Him or not made no difference to Him.

Zacchaeus recognized who Jesus was

How did the Old Testament describe the appearance of Jesus? It said He was like a stem out of dry ground. One characteristic is that He was tall. And His appearance had nothing that we should desire Him. So there was not the least outward majesty about Him that would make people say He looked like a general, a sage, a master, a man of power, a manly hero, or a person of high rank. To anyone's eyes, the appearance of Jesus was like that.

But though His appearance was like that, His eyes, His words, and His bearing were not. He was very humble and yet dignified. Zacchaeus observed closely to see what kind of person Jesus was. As chief tax collector, working as a tax official, he knew the types of men well. He could size a man up to some degree just by his looks, so he may have tried to make Jesus out with a point of view of his own.

But Zacchaeus saw Jesus rightly. Watching from up in the sycamore tree as Jesus, of whom he had only heard by rumor, approached from far below, he recognized: truly, that man is the Savior people spoke of. It was not that something special radiated from Jesus' body; yet if one watched quietly, He was different from ordinary men. He did not swagger or show off, and though many disciples followed Him about calling Him

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Teacher, Teacher, there was not the least self-conceit in Him. He silently went His way and did His work, and when He met the sick as He went about, He healed them. Zacchaeus had the eyes to recognize His true form.

Jesus was approaching the foot of the sycamore tree, and Zacchaeus was looking down from above. Jesus, coming along from a distance, reached the foot of the sycamore tree, looked quietly up at Zacchaeus, and said, *"Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house" (Luke 19:5)*. Jesus already knew that his name was Zacchaeus, and He already knew what occupation the man had.

The people around murmured. When a man is born on this earth and placed in certain circumstances, he cannot but live bound to and ruled by those circumstances. Did Zacchaeus become a chief tax collector because he wanted to? Being short and without physical strength, he must have used his head, studied, reckoned well, and pulled strings here and there to become chief tax collector.

When Jesus said, *"Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house,"* Zacchaeus and Jesus recognized each other. Zacchaeus recognized who Jesus was, and Jesus also recognized Zacchaeus. Then Zacchaeus confesses his sins: *"If I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19:8)*. Having met Jesus, he confessed his sins. How could a tax collector say such a thing? Ordinary people do not speak of their own sins. Yet meeting Jesus for the first time, he says it.

Jesus said, *"He also is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9)*. This means that Zacchaeus recognized and believed in Jesus. He knew that Jesus is the Savior—the Son of God who came to save mankind from sin, the Creator, and the Savior.

This was a conversation shared between two who knew each

other's hearts. Zacchaeus met the Lord and received salvation. After that he probably no longer did tax work. He would have given up his position as chief tax collector and quit. He would also have sold off and settled much of the wealth he had gained by over-collecting taxes. How would he have lived after that? He would have followed Jesus or lived as Jesus wanted.

Who is Jesus?

Then what about you and me? Have you ever thought about who Jesus is? Jesus has come before us and we find Jesus in the Bible, and we must think deeply about who He is. We truly need to think deeply. Systematic theology examines systematically what the sixty-six books of the Bible say about the person of Jesus.

If we draw it out of the Bible, who is Jesus? He is the Creator. He is the Creator who made the universe. When He made this universe, He said, *"Let there be."* And He worked together with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. What kind of being is Jesus? He is not a man; He is the Creator and God. Only, to save mankind from sin, He came to this earth for a while in a human body.

He is the Creator, God, and the Savior, and He came to this earth in a human body. We must examine who Jesus is, and according to how we know Him, your faith and mine become sound. If Jesus were merely an ordinary man, believing in Him would be useless no matter how much we believed. Following Him and being loyal to Him would be useless. But Jesus is God, the Savior, our Shepherd, and the Judge. He is the Judge who will judge all people, angels, and all spiritual beings in this universe. If only we know that Jesus rightly, we can believe in

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Him, and then our faith becomes firm.

We believe that Jesus saved us with the water and the Spirit. But we must think about who this Jesus is. Is Jesus a human being of the same class as Confucius, Mencius, Socrates, or Sakyamuni, as we know them? If so, He is nothing much. If He were a being like Sakyamuni, you too could become a Sakyamuni. It is nothing. That man, too, in the end only struggled to solve the problem of birth, aging, sickness, and death—why man is born, lives, falls ill, grows old, and dies—and then died; he is a man just like us. Confucius is also a man just like us, no more than an educator; Socrates is no more than a philosopher; and Mencius and Xunzi are the same.

But what about Jesus? Jesus is different in origin. He is not a man; He is the Creator. He is my Creator, my Savior, the Jesus who saved me. Jesus is the Creator and God, different in origin from human teachers, and those who tried to become gods themselves are nothing before God.

Therefore, when He was to come to this earth in a human body, an angel told Mary in advance: *"You shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. Is not His name special from the moment He was born in a human body? Jesus—the name means the Savior. He is the One who will save His people from all their sins.

Jesus, who came to seek and to save the lost

Jesus knows well the situation of a man like Zacchaeus. Who is there that is not ruled by the circumstances he is placed in? Suppose you and I had been born, say, in a brewery where rice wine is made, and had grown up in it. Would we drink rice wine well or not? We would easily become people who drink rice

wine well and gamble too. If your father works at the tax office, you study hard and become a tax accountant. Everyone is bound to be ruled by the environment in which he grew up.

Jesus is different in origin; He is different from man. He is God the Savior—God who came to save mankind, that is, sinners, from sin. What does Jesus say? He says, *"The Son of Man has come"*—and that the Son of Man has come means that He came in the body of a man. As God promised, He said He would be born of a virgin, and He was born borrowing the body of Mary.

Jesus said, *"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10)*. He came to seek and to save the lost. What kind of person is the lost? A man like Zacchaeus knows that he is lost. He had done many bad things, seized other people's money and pocketed it, and paid tribute to his superiors, so he knew his sins well. He was a man who knew well: if I live like this and die, I go to hell.

Other people may have been interested only in Jesus healing diseases, but Zacchaeus watched closely to know whether He was truly the Messiah and Savior promised in the Old Testament. And faith arose in his heart. He recognized Him. Then Jesus called him and acknowledged him as a son of Abraham. We, too, must know before God that we were the lost.

We must stand before the law of God and see what we are

When we stand before God, whether we are great or lowly makes no difference: we are so weak, so lacking, and so worthless that we come to know we are people who, if we live like this and go on as we are, will go to hell. One must know that

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one is a lost person, a lost sheep before God, and believe in Jesus. If one does not know this and thinks, I am a decent person, it is hard to be saved. When people compare themselves with one another, there is no one greatly superior and no one greatly inferior; all are similar. One person shows off in this area and another shows off in that area, so all are much alike. That is why one fails to know one's own true self.

When can a man know his true self? It is when he believes in God and stands squarely before the word of God, before the law of God—the Law. He said, You shall have no other gods before Me; we must think before this word whether we have really set up no other god, whether we have not believed something other than God as god. In fact, we often serve what is not God as if it were God. We often treat material things, power, and many other things like God. That is wrong, and we must admit that it is wrong. We must admit: God, I am a sinner who acknowledged something other than You as god; I have committed that sin.

Second, He said not to make any carved image besides God, and not to bow down to it or serve it; we must think whether we have never done so. People very often make images other than God and serve and follow them. Then they have already broken that commandment. If we think whether we have never dishonored the name of God or taken it in vain, there are many such times. Have you never spoken ill of God? Have you never shaken your fist before God?

When you were angry—thinking, if God exists, how is it that in this world the wicked prosper and the pure are trampled and killed; if God exists, can this be?—have you never cursed at God? People often have such times. And have you ever kept the law God has ordained? When we think before God, God exists, and there is the law He has spoken.

We must stand before that word and see what we are. Only then do we come to know that we are lost souls. He said, *"Honor your father and your mother"*—but how much have we honored our parents? Man is a being who only makes his parents' life hard. Later, when he comes to his senses, his parents are no longer living; they have already passed away. He also said, *"You shall not murder."*—yet we do not know how many times a day we commit murder. When some driver suddenly blasts his horn, we are startled and get so angry at him that we even feel like killing him in our hearts. We even feel: may he crash and die. That too is murder. He said, *"You shall not murder."* If we murder even in our hearts, we are the lost before God, people who cannot but go to hell. We must know and admit that we are such people.

The Lord came to this earth to save exactly such people. Jesus received baptism from John to remove our sins. With that baptism He took all the sins of the world upon His own body, and bearing those sins, He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving in our place the judgment we should have received. And He rose again on the third day and became our Savior. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By believing this gospel we receive the remission of all those sins.

The Shepherd who came to find the lost sheep

Jesus came to meet and save sinners who, like Zacchaeus, could not escape from their own situation. And He met them. He saved them. He gave them faith. We too must do likewise. We are not particularly better than Zacchaeus. Before I knew Jesus, I also thought I was quite somebody. But when I dug deeply into who Jesus is—whether He is a man or a creature, God or the

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Creator—He was the Creator, the Savior, the Shepherd, and the Judge.

He is the One who came to save the lost sheep. Before God we are no more than the lost. When a sheep loses its flock and its master, there is only death. If a sheep wanders alone grazing, it meets a wolf or a wild dog and is bitten to death without mercy. However fine a dog may be, when it loses its master its worth drops; wandering about, if it meets a rough man it is killed, and if it meets a thief it is caught and sold. That is how packs of dogs roaming the streets come about. We too were no different from that before God.

We were in fact such beings before God, but the Lord came to find us and met us. When we too looked closely at who the Lord is, He was God and the Savior. He actually came to this earth and saved you and me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit; He became our Shepherd, and as the Judge He delivered us from all that judgment. It is because He came to us as our Savior.

Know Jesus and believe in Him

When we rightly know His attributes, we come to know and believe in Jesus as our God, our Savior, our Judge, and our Shepherd. Then He dwells in our hearts and we also enter into His heart. Thus we receive salvation. Zacchaeus, you, and I are all people no different from one another. The person who considers himself great can never receive salvation.

A person who has never stood before God never tries to know who Jesus is. Jesus is the great One, the Creator. He is the One without sin, the Holy One, the One who can rule over the Devil and all things. The angels, too, were all made by Jesus.

But among the angels there were those who opposed Him, and Jesus cast them out. So they became devils, and He made hell for those devils.

To man, as to the angels, He gave free will. He does not force absolute obedience; God has established the law. Some obey absolutely, believe absolutely, and work, while others go against His whole will. He is the One who judges such people justly and sends them to hell. He is the Jesus who saved you and me.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of kings. Knowing this, we must, like Zacchaeus, examine in detail who Jesus is. Zacchaeus believed that Jesus is God. How could he know it all in that short time? He knew by the rumors he heard, and when he met Him in person, he recognized Him. How can we know? We can know through the word of God. Though He is not visible to our eyes, we can know, believe, and be saved. But if you have not yet known that you are lost, you must first know your own state. And you must believe and admit. You must acknowledge that Jesus is God, the Savior, the Shepherd, and the Judge. If you do not acknowledge this fact, you merely degenerate into a religionist, are ruined, and go to hell.

Where is there a great human being before God? Among ourselves we say this one is better and that one worse, but it is only acorns measuring their heights; before God we are only lacking and ashamed. We are people who cannot but go to hell because of our sins. We must admit it. In any case, just as the Lord met Zacchaeus, the Lord meets you and me.

When we hear the word, we speak so easily of Jesus as the Savior that we may treat Him as someone to be taken lightly, but Jesus is not such a One. In heaven and earth, in the whole world of spiritual beings and the world of men, there is no one to compare with Him. There is not even an angel to compare with Him—who would dare compare? The likes of Socrates and

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Sakyamuni are nothing before God. They strove to become gods themselves and showed themselves off. He said woe to those who are approved before men. The person who shows off and seeks recognition before men goes to hell. Pretending to be learned and great in the world, one goes to hell. That is why such people do not believe. Only when you know who Jesus is can you believe.

I know who Jesus is. You are the Creator, our Savior, truly our Shepherd and Judge; You are our life, the God who gave us eternal life and resurrection. Without Him we cannot exist. He is our Master, our God, and our Savior—the Savior of the world. We must believe. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

I want you to have faith and become those who give thanks like Zacchaeus. Having heard the word, let us reflect on the word, pray, sing praise, and close. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The one who follows the Lord

< Luke 19:1-10 >

"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.' Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

The man who climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus

In today's passage there appears a man named Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus lived in the region of Jericho. This man's characteristics were that he was short and that he was a chief tax collector. In today's terms, his position was something like the

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head of a customs office.

Now Jesus entered that region to pass through Jericho. The news that Jesus was passing through Jericho was passed from mouth to mouth until it finally reached the ears of Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus, too, had long been interested in Jesus and had heard many stories about Him. He had heard that He raised the dead, and that in the open field He blessed two fish and five barley loaves and fed a crowd of five thousand men, counting only the men. He had heard many stories about Jesus who raised the widow's son, Jesus who raised Lazarus, and Jesus who healed countless sick people.

This was the very Jesus who was on everyone's lips because the whole nation of Israel wanted to make Him king of the Jews. Zacchaeus heard the news that this Jesus was just then passing through the region of Jericho where he lived.

But Zacchaeus could not see Jesus properly among the crowds of people, because he was short. So Zacchaeus tried to see Jesus by climbing up a sycamore tree.

The Lord who passed along that road to meet Zacchaeus

While he was up in the sycamore tree looking closely down at Jesus, Jesus, passing under that tree, stopped and looked up at Zacchaeus. And He said, *"Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house."*

Zacchaeus made haste, came down, and received the Lord with joy. And immediately he said to the Lord, *"Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19:8)*. Then Jesus said, *"Today salvation has come to this house,*

because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:9–10).

That Jesus passed along that particular road at that time was to save Zacchaeus. We can know this fact.

Zacchaeus, too, was interested in Jesus and wanted to see Him. But more than Zacchaeus was interested in Jesus, Jesus wanted to meet Zacchaeus, and He wanted to meet him and save him.

If Jesus were not divine, if He were not God, how could He have known Zacchaeus? Moreover, Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, censured by many people. The words, today I must stay at your house, are the exact opposite of the worldly wisdom that seeks people's favor.

Jesus knows every single person. Jesus is God and our Creator. It is only that we do not know ourselves; Jesus knows us well. Because He is the One who made us, He knows it all: how we fell, what sins have spread in our hearts, what state we are now in, and where we will go in the future. He is our Lord who knows even the road ahead of our lives.

The life of the person who has met the Lord becomes different

Our Lord knew everything about Zacchaeus. When He said, Zacchaeus, come down, for today I must stay at your house, Zacchaeus made haste, came down, and received Jesus into his house. And right away he said that he would distribute half of his possessions to the poor, and that if he had extorted anything from anyone, he would repay it fourfold.

This is what happens when one meets Jesus. Because Jesus knows everything about us, the person who has truly met Jesus

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confesses that he will sell what he owns and give to the poor. When one meets Jesus, all one's evil is exposed, and one admits that evil, repents, and forsakes it. And one comes to accept Jesus as one's own Savior.

Jesus knows us far better than we know ourselves. If a person knows and believes the fact that Jesus is truly the Son of God and our Savior who saved mankind from sin—the Savior of sinners—from that day that person receives the remission of sin, becomes one of God's people, and his whole life is changed.

When would a chief tax collector ever have made up his mind to sell half of his property and share it? On the contrary, they were men who exploited what belonged to the poor, collecting far more in the name of paying taxes to Rome, handing up only the fixed portion, and putting the rest into their own pockets. The chief tax collectors of that day were all like that.

Yet such a man said instead that he would sell half of his property and share it, and repay what he had extorted. It was because he was thankful that the Lord, knowing everything about a lowly sinner, had remitted all his sins and saved him from sin. Out of that thankfulness he turned and said that he would give half of his property to the poor.

A change of life comes to the person who has met our Lord. Change comes not only to his faith and his soul but also to his daily life. In the old days he lived only for himself. But after truly meeting the Lord, he can no longer live only for himself. He comes to live for the poor and for the people around him.

The Lord who saved us from sin has the power to change people. When we meet the Lord, we receive the remission of sin and life becomes different. The life of the person who has met the Lord surely becomes different.

Zacchaeus said that if he had extorted anything, he would

make restitution fourfold. Though it is not recorded here, he probably laid down his position as chief tax collector. If he had exploited that much, fourfold means paying back four times, does it not? Who would keep on with that work while paying back that much? This is no different from saying that from that day he would quit that position.

From the world's point of view, he was a man who lost his occupation. But in the eyes of the people of Israel of that day, Zacchaeus was a man who had turned over a new leaf. He had turned. He was changed from an evil man into a very good man.

The people the Lord went to find were notorious sinners

Who changed this Zacchaeus? Our Lord changed him. The Lord met him first. He called him: Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.

Jesus did not come to this earth for good people. He came for people who were worthless like Zacchaeus, people who were like thieves seizing what belonged to others, people whose sins were plainly exposed. He did not come for the good, the righteous, and the upright. The man our Lord met when He came to Jericho was, not only in his own heart but objectively, in everyone's eyes, an unmistakable thief and a bad man, a sinner famous in that town.

The Lord also once went to find such a woman. There was a woman famous in her town for sin, and the Samaritan woman He met at the well was also a woman famous in her town. Zacchaeus, too, was a man very famous in his town. Our Lord often goes to find such people.

But what about man? Do we go to find such people? Are we

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not afraid of even meeting such people? Is it not dreadful even to hear stories about them? But our Lord is God, not merely a man, and so it is not so with Him.

Beyond our imagination, transcending our capacity, our Lord went to find the person famous for sin, the person clearly shown to be a sinner. He did not go to find the good; He went to find sinners.

How did the Lord remove those sins?

Then how did the Lord remove the sins of those sinners? Our Lord took all those sins upon His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. What did John the Baptist testify the next day when he saw Jesus? He said, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. At that time the sins of the notorious sinner also passed on to the body of Jesus.

And bearing those sins just as they were, He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and received in our place all the judgment for those sins. He said, It is finished, and breathed His last. And on the third day He rose from the dead and became the Savior of those who believe. Having washed away the sin of the world once and for all like this—that is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This gospel makes notorious sinners as white as snow.

With this gospel the Lord saves notorious sinners. When the Lord was hung on the Cross, robbers were also nailed at His right and His left. One of those robbers was also a man of evil fame. He was a chief among robbers. But that robber believed in Jesus. Then Jesus said to him: I will be with you in Paradise.

Our Lord did not come to save those who do not sin, those

who have no sin in their hearts, the perfect. Those born with sin, those who cannot but sin, sinners exposed even to other people's eyes, sinners even in their own eyes, sinners of great notoriety, sinners who cannot but go to hell, those who cannot but be destroyed before God and before men—our Lord saved such people. He came to save such people. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

The Lord who called Zacchaeus has called you and me today. Just as He called, Zacchaeus, come down, He has called each of us by name, one by one.

Among us, too, there are many who used to live such lives. One brother was a man well known in his area. But our Lord called him: do not stay only in the tavern—come here. That brother came out without even knowing why, and the One he met there was the Lord, and He became his Savior. He came to know that Jesus is not a man but God, and the Savior who had taken all his sins upon Himself. From then on he was so thankful that a change arose in his heart; he began to serve the gospel and never went back to his old place.

He is not the only one. The brothers sitting here, too, however quiet they may look on the outside, were each men of some notoriety. However respectable they acted, what schemes they were turning over inside showed plainly in their eyes. Yet our Lord, knowing all that was within them, called them: come here. And when He called them and looked, they were indeed sinners. To such people the Lord said, I have come to save you, and He saved them.

There is also a brother who came to see himself only after going into the army. He was a man whose parents took hold of his body and sat him down in the place of worship, but whose heart wandered only outside. Just by looking at his eyes one could tell where his heart had gone. But the Lord sent him to the

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army to let him see himself, and called him—now it is time to come back—and made him truly believe in the Lord and return.

There is also a brother who was hiding, agonizing alone because of sin. By the world's standard he had not even committed any great sin, but being tender-hearted he was struggling alone. But our Lord called him: come quickly.

It is the same with me. The Lord called me. I had wandered in the world and groped through every kind of philosophy, but there was no hope at all and nothing more to try. Even though I believed in Jesus, I was always in anguish and always had sin. But the Lord called me. When I went and saw Him, He became my Lord. The Lord not only knew all my sins but knew everything about me, and He solved the whole problem of my sins with the baptism He received at the Jordan River and with the Cross. So I returned to the Lord.

After meeting the Lord, I came to want to share what I had with the poor. The Lord made that heart arise of itself. By nature I was a man who could not give away what I had. But since meeting the Lord, the desire to give has become earnest: every day I earn money in order to share, and whatever I do, I do it to give. It is not to fill my own pocket but to give. That heart that wants to give is the very heart of the Lord and the work of the Lord.

The Lord has changed people. In the old days I thought I should build a chapel as big as a large school. I had the dream that church education would be done properly only if there were a sanctuary and classrooms for each department, with educational space about ten times the sanctuary, and I intended to do that kind of ministry. But after I met the Lord, that plan collapsed completely. Now, even if I live in a tiny thatched cottage, I have become one who lends and shares with people rather than one who borrows. The Lord has changed me into such a person.

The One who had nothing that we should desire

Here there is something we must note carefully. Zacchaeus was a man who, when the Lord called him, turned and denied himself.

An ordinary man, told, Zacchaeus, come down, would have been startled. He would have thought: when has He ever seen me, that He knows my name? Judging by the look in His eyes He seems to know everything about me; if I go down, everything will come out. The rumors are already all over town, and now Jesus has even called me by name—I will be disgraced. Wanting to hide one's sins and run away—that is the heart of an ordinary man.

But Zacchaeus denied himself. When the Lord called, he said, Yes, I will come down, and came down quickly and received Him into his house. There was self-denial in him. Zacchaeus could meet the Lord because he had self-denial.

Our Lord said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24)*. Everyone who denies himself receives the remission of sin. Everyone who denies himself comes to follow the Lord. Without self-denial one cannot receive the remission of sin.

Only when we deny ourselves do we meet the Lord. The person who denies himself comes to follow the Lord. And the person who believes in the Lord follows the Lord and receives blessing from the Lord.

Zacchaeus denied himself. When He said, Zacchaeus, I must stay at your house, he immediately came down and welcomed the Lord. That is, he received the Lord. He believed in Him as the Creator who knew everything about him and as the Savior who had come to save him. He believed that the One to whom all the words recorded in the Old Testament point is this very

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Jesus, and that the One prophesied in the Old Testament is this very Jesus.

The faith of those who received salvation in the New Testament is all like this. Those who denied themselves received salvation.

Think of it. If a young man of only thirty-three, not even properly dressed, his frame like a stem out of dry ground and nothing to look at, came in and said, I am the Savior; I am the Messiah—would there be anyone among us who would believe? Would we not doubt first?

If His appearance had been handsome, if light had shone from His body, if a halo had glowed behind Him, if there had been something different from ordinary men, we might have thought: perhaps it is so. But when our Lord came to this earth, He was not such a one. In appearance He looked even inferior to ordinary men.

That is why two kinds of pictures of Jesus remain. In a picture painted in a certain monastery long ago, He is painted—I am sorry even to say it—like a shabby and deficient man. On the other hand, in some pictures He is painted as a fine young man, a very handsome man with fine beard and hair. The latter picture is our wishful thinking—because we love Jesus, we wish He had come in such a body—and it is the object of admiration in our hearts. Only such a Jesus, people think, would be worth admiring.

But in reality Jesus was not such a one. He was like a stem out of dry ground; His appearance and His looks were nothing to see, and there was nothing in Him that people should desire. There was nothing to desire, nothing to love, nothing to respect.

Only, the words He preached were truth, wondrous and mysterious beyond measure. For that reason, those who heard His words believed in Jesus, who came in the flesh, as their

Savior. They denied themselves, denied the common sense of that day, and received the remission of sin through faith. No one who did not deny himself received the remission of sin.

What about those who did not deny themselves? They thought: if I follow Jesus, I will get a high office; I too will become a great man.

But Jesus tore down all the expectations of those who followed Him. Stripped of His garments, He was scourged with forty stripes minus one, and His whole body became covered with blood. He wore a crown of thorns, was struck on the cheeks by the soldiers, was spit upon, and was mocked. And with His garments stripped off, nails were driven through both His hands and both His feet, and He died on the Cross, in front of all the people, at the place called the Skull. Thus He disappointed all those who followed Him for fleshly reasons.

In the beginning, very many people followed Jesus. Since it says that great multitudes followed Him, in the region of Galilee most of the people of that region, men and women alike, followed Him about. It was so when He went to towns like Galilee, Capernaum, or Nazareth where He had lived. When He began His ministry at thirty, that many followed.

Then how many followed at the time He died on the Cross? They all ran away. The disciple John, His mother in the flesh, Mary, and the sisters who believed in Jesus as their Savior—only these few came to that place and watched. The body of Jesus was received by Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the council, together with Nicodemus, who had once come to Jesus by night.

Jesus spent thirty-three years in the land of Israel, and in His three years of public ministry He saved many people; and when we read the records of those who received the remission of sin, they were without exception people who denied themselves.

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They were people who listened to His words, compared them with the words recorded in the Old Testament, and believed that He was assuredly the Savior. Where else is there one who raises the dead?

True power is different. Once a person is healed before God, the disease never recurs. But healing received from false ones only produces the appearance of a temporary cure. There is also such a thing as self-hypnosis. When, in a crowd, someone claims to work miracles and says that a certain person has been healed today and that he wants the same blessing to come upon you, people fall into a hypnosis in which their illness seems healed. But such a phenomenon only appears for a time; later it is not so.

The one who denies himself follows the Lord

In the Bible, those who met the Lord are those who denied themselves. We must know this fact. Only when we deny ourselves do we receive the remission of sin, and only when we deny ourselves can we follow the Lord.

In our lives, what is the hardest and most difficult thing in receiving the remission of sin and following the Lord? Is it not precisely self-denial—denying our own thoughts?

But self-denial is not something achieved by resolving to deny oneself. One must know and believe that this word—If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me—is the very word of God.

If we only know and accept the fact that this word is what our Lord has spoken to us, that word works within us and makes us deny ourselves. It is not that we accomplish it. This word comes into us, makes us deny ourselves, and makes us follow the Lord even in hardship.

The word comes into us and makes us deny ourselves

What about you? Hearing the word that you must deny yourself, do you feel burdened again? But it is not like that. Denial does not happen because we strive to deny ourselves. Could we do it? But when we believe that this word is the word of God, that word comes into us and makes us deny ourselves. That is, it accomplishes self-denial for us.

That is why the word of God has power and is sharper than any sword, piercing and dividing our thoughts, soul, flesh, and even joints—even the thoughts hidden deep within us. When we follow God, I want you to know and believe that this word—If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself—is the word of God.

Zacchaeus said, I will sell half of my property and distribute it to the poor, and, If I have extorted anything, I will repay it fourfold, because he denied himself. And that self-denial came through receiving Jesus.

What does this tell us? We have received the remission of sin exactly like Zacchaeus. Then what must we do? We must first listen closely to what the will of God is. Rather than putting forward before God what I will do, we must hear what the word of God is and what that word means. If we only acknowledge and accept the word of God, that word works the work of change within us.

Of course, denying oneself is not easy. But Zacchaeus could follow the Lord because he had self-denial, and Zacchaeus could be saved because he had self-denial. And Zacchaeus finally received blessing because he recognized Jesus.

We, too, can truly follow Jesus because we believe that this written word of God is the truth. We follow the Lord because we believe that this word is the word of God and the word of truth.

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It is not that we follow because our will is strong. Because this word is the truth, it comes into us, overcomes and governs our own selves, and makes us surrender and submit. Thus it makes us those who follow the truth, those united with the truth. Today you and I also have come to be able to follow the Lord by believing in our Lord and by that word coming into us and working.

Dear beloved saints, we too were truly people living in Jericho. We too were people like Zacchaeus. We were full of the desires of the world and could not be satisfied with the things of the world. But we met our Lord. Perhaps we were people who chased after the things of the world even more than Zacchaeus.

But our Lord one day came to Jericho and, just as He said, Zacchaeus, come down, He called each one of us. He met us. And He made us deny ourselves.

In fact, before we met the Lord, we knew nothing—what salvation is, what self-denial is, what we should follow, what is right, what guidance is. But our Lord came into us and taught us one by one, and though we cannot do it by ourselves, the Lord works so that we do it.

Thus our Lord has helped you and me until we reached this place today. He has been our Ebenezer. We give thanks to our Lord. We give thanks to the Lord who met Zacchaeus and also changed him.

In following the Lord, we ourselves are people who truly cannot deny ourselves on our own. But when we know and believe that this word—Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me—is the word of God, and hold that faith, I believe that through the Lord and His word He will make us deny ourselves and follow the Lord to the end. We give thanks to the Lord. Let us make supplication before our Lord. Let us pray: Give us the power to believe the word and follow the Lord; give us such a blessing. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Engrave the word of the Lord on your heart

< Luke 19:11-27 >

"Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Therefore He said: 'A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, "Do business till I come." But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us." 'And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, "Master, your mina has earned ten minas." And he said to him, "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities." And the second came, saying, "Master, your mina has earned five minas." Likewise he said to him, "You also be over five cities." 'Then another came, saying, "Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow." And he said to him, "Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not

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deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?" 'And he said to those who stood by, "Take the mina from him, and give it to him who has ten minas." (But they said to him, "Master, he has ten minas.") "For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me."'"

In the word of Luke that we read today, too, a scene of settling accounts appears. Looking at the word: a certain nobleman was to go to a far country to receive a kingdom. Before leaving, he called the servants of his house, distributed ten minas of silver, one to each, and told them to do business till he came back. To make a profit—that was the master's will.

But after the master left, there was a murmuring crowd. There were also citizens who sent a delegation, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. But whatever they did, the master departed.

To whom is this word spoken? It is the word our Lord speaks to the Church.

The Lord has given us talents

The Lord came to this earth in a human body, received our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, He removed all the judgment against sin and saved

us from sin. And then He gave us talents.

Here it says one mina, but in Matthew it says talent. A talent means an ability. The word talent, by which we call a gifted person, also comes from this. After saving you and me, our Lord gave us the talent to live for the gospel and to live by faith in Him. He gave us new talents. He gave us faith, He gave us power, and He gave us talents.

Whether or not anyone said, I do not want that man to become my king, the Lord came to this earth and saved us. Not only did He save us; He gave you and me new talents to live by faith, and faith, and blessing.

Then what about us? We have received all the talents, and the Lord has given us everything. But if there were ten people, among them there were also those who did not want Jesus to become their king. One said, I do not want that man to become my king. Others, being people who had always served their master, knew their master as master, and served, believed, and followed him. When the master entrusted work to them and left, saying he would go to a far place and return, they did that work very faithfully. There were two kinds of people.

The person who does not want Jesus to become his king

Our Lord is now not on this earth in the flesh but is present in the Holy Spirit; yet when He actually comes again, He will settle accounts of your work and mine. He reckons with those who have received the remission of sin. He asks: I gave you strength and talents—how much business have you done?

When the Lord asks, each person reports the result of the work he has done with the talents he received. He reports: Lord,

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You gave me this talent so that I could serve You, and so I did this work and that work.

But there was one man. When the master called his name and told him to speak, with a self-assured face he took out something wrapped in a cloth and set it down before his master. What the master had given him when he left, he had wrapped up and kept just as it was, and brought back untouched.

This man was a person who did not want Jesus to become his king. He said, You are a very austere and fearsome man. He found it objectionable: how could you give only one mina and then tell me to do business and bring you a profit? He held it out, saying, I do not like you, so I return to you what I received from you. When the cloth was untied, the one mina was in it just as it had been.

He said, I knew you to be an austere man, and I was afraid of you. He said, You are a man who collects what you did not deposit and reaps what you did not sow—you are exactly such a man. Before Jesus he said, You collect what you did not deposit and reap what you did not sow.

Then the master said: Wicked servant, out of your own mouth I will judge you—did you know that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow?

What did this man think of Jesus? He protested: you gave me nothing, yet you try to take much? Saying that the master tried to reap without sowing, he argued: only if you had given me something could you take anything back. He was saying, You are not even my king, are you?

This man's heart was like that from the root. All ten received one mina alike, but this man took his, wrapped it up, kept it as it was, and when time passed and the master returned, brought it back as it was. In his own thinking, he had done nothing wrong—there was no fault in him at all.

At the end, our Lord rebuked this man and called such people enemies. He said, Bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.

All the talents we have were given by God

This word is a word that everyone must hear, whether he has received the remission of sin or not. I believe we must think it over deeply once, and examine our faith to see whether such a heart is in our hearts too. We should think for a moment whether the Lord demands anything from you and me without having given us anything, and whether the Lord is really an austere and bad king.

Seen with faith, whether we are born again or not, there is not one thing we have not received from the Lord. God made all things, and God gave them to us. If God turned His eyes from us and withdrew His hand even for a moment, we would have no strength to do anything by ourselves.

Man is so weak that he can die from infection by one small germ. Looking at history up to now, countless people have died because of a single epidemic. There were times when a million died, when ten million died. Even now there are cases where a perfectly healthy person suddenly collapses from a disease whose cause cannot be known. Man is that weak.

If God took away our breath during the night, we are people who could do nothing. If God made the weather only a little colder, we would freeze to death; if He made it only a little hotter, we would collapse from the heat and die. We truly cannot live without God. I know that we live because God adjusts everything just right.

Everything on this earth is also what God has given, and all

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the talents you and I have are also what God has given. Being able to move our hands is a talent. Being able to walk is a talent. Do you know how many people in this world cannot walk even though they have two legs? Truly many. Our being healthy is also a talent God has given.

Being able to earn money is also a talent. There are many people in the world, but not just anyone can earn money. Right now there are so many people turned out onto the streets; companies collapse, and even great corporations collapse. A man who was the president of a large company may fall overnight to a position of carrying dishes in someone else's shop. There are many such people not only in our country but all over the world. Those people had a talent and lost it.

We must know that these talents you and I have were given by God. That you can think—that ability to think is also a talent. We must know that the power to think was also given by God. Do you think you can think as you please? Do you think you can control all your thoughts and your heart as you please?

Even our thoughts must be governed by God. Otherwise strange thoughts come in. Satan the Devil blows strange thoughts into the mind, making it seem as if someone is chasing me with a knife, blowing in thoughts like: why should the likes of you go on living? When a person is caught by such thoughts, he collapses. Those who take their own lives are usually caught by such thoughts. I know that being able to think soundly is also given by God.

Among all that you and I have, there is not one thing the Lord has not given. If the Lord were to take it back, I know nothing would remain to us. Everything we have is what the Master has given.

God is our Master and King

Then who is that Master? He is God, Jesus Christ, who saved us. He is God and the Savior of you and me. What is that God to us? He is our Master and King.

But how did this King become our King? He did not become king by pressing us down with force. He bought us at a price and became our King.

The Lord Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River at the age of thirty. With that one baptism He received the sin of this world passed on to His own body. When John hesitated, Jesus said, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. That work of receiving the sin of the world passed on to His body was all the righteousness of God.

And bearing those sins just as they were, He was hung on the Cross, said, It is finished, poured out His precious blood and died, receiving the judgment in our place. And on the third day He overcame death and rose again, and He is now the King of kings seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

This King bought us with the baptism He received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross, paying His own life as the price. We are a people bought with the price of His blood. Therefore Jesus Christ is our King. He is not a king we elected and enthroned; He bought us and became our King.

The person who does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as his king

Yet there are people, born again or not, who do not serve as their king the God who created heaven and earth and all things in the universe—the Lord who is the Master of life, the Jesus

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Christ who is the Master of every talent. There are people who refuse to have Him as their king. That must not be. We must acknowledge Him as King and serve Him as King.

What happens to the person who does not serve the King as king? He loses all he has. On this earth there are truly many people who have lost everything and been turned out onto the streets. Go to any country and there are such people.

As we see on television, there are many people sleeping in stations and on the streets. The state designates areas, provides shelter, and even puts them into public works jobs. Among those people there are very many who are perfectly capable. There are many who ran at least a small or medium-sized business, countless who graduated from university, and countless who received doctoral degrees. If you go inside that world, there are so many things we could not imagine.

Those people never imagined they would come to such a state. They became so overnight; they were not such people from the beginning. They were people who lived well and had families, but when they could no longer bring money home, they lost face before their families and ended up on the streets.

But what the person who does not acknowledge the King as king suffers does not stop at that. He said, Take the one mina from him. And to whom did He say to give it? To the one who has ten minas. Even though they said, Master, he already has ten minas, the King declared: to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. This word is the King's thought, the King's heart, and the King's command.

What does this word mean? It means that to the person who acknowledges the King as king, the King bestows grace. But what about the person who does not acknowledge the King as king? The King considers even what that person has as wasted

on him. Even the basic talents, even the basic blessings, are wasted on him—that is the meaning.

Does the King's treatment feel too harsh to you? Would you not be the same? If you were a master and had a servant under you, and that servant did not acknowledge you as master, would you not want to take back all you had given?

How much more our Master, Jesus Christ: He gave us life, saved us from sin, delivered us from hell and destruction, and also gave us the talents to live well while we live on this earth. The talents of your body and the talents of your mind were all given by our Lord, whether or not you believe in Jesus. There is nothing that God has not given.

Then, when the King has given everything, is it right not to acknowledge the King as king? It must never be so. Those who do not believe in God need no mention. If a person who believes in God, accepts what Jesus Christ has done, and has received the remission of sin does not serve that Jesus Christ as King even after receiving the remission of sin, how would the King treat that person? He takes back all he has and gives it to the one who has more.

Such things appear several times in the Bible. In the days of King David there lived in Israel a landowner named Nabal. He kept sheep and cattle, farmed as well, and was a great rich man of that region. Now David had helped him much. In those days there were many bandits and robbers, and it often happened that they came with swords, killed the master, and carried off the property. David had his soldiers hold back such bands.

But this man Nabal despised David. Then Nabal died, and afterwards his wife Abigail went to David. Abigail was a person who served David as her king and her master. When he told her to come, she went without delay. From the world's point of view many things could be said, but what does this event show? It

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shows what happens to the person who does not acknowledge the king as king.

Is there anyone besides Jesus Christ who could be our king?

Dear fellow believers, is Jesus Christ King to you and me, or not? He is King. Has Jesus Christ given you everything, or not? Before we were born again and after we were born again, He has given us every circumstance and everything. He is giving still.

What becomes of the person who does not serve Jesus Christ as his king and does not keep Him in his heart? He becomes just like a person who is not born again. Not only does he lose all that his flesh has, but spiritually he is put to death.

Even those who are not born again sing at Christmas that the Savior has come, that the King of kings has come. By whom was the reckoning of human history divided? It was divided by Jesus Christ. The calendar era we use now—on whom is it based? It was made taking as its starting point the time when Jesus Christ came to this earth. That fact alone makes it abundantly clear that Jesus Christ is the Master of this universe. Even those not born again know and acknowledge that fact.

Every man has a tomb and death, and waits for the day he will rise again. But Jesus Christ has no tomb. There is no tomb where His body remains. The One who made, rules, and governs all things is that Jesus Christ. The name Jesus means the Savior, and the word Christ means the anointed King. So Jesus Christ means that the King has become our Savior.

The person who has received the remission of sin cannot but acknowledge Jesus as his King. Why? Because to say that He delivered him from sin means that He delivered him from

destruction, from death, and from the Devil. Who would not serve as his king One to whom he owes so much?

The person who does not have Jesus Christ as his king is a person who has lost his discernment. How much more, if a born-again person does not have Jesus Christ as his king, what is he? He is a truly foolish person.

If a born-again person does not serve Jesus Christ as his king, is there anyone else who could be king besides Jesus Christ? Is there a king whom you could respect, love, follow, and treasure, a king who would truly help you and treat you well? It would be nice if there were such a king. Besides Jesus Christ, is there anyone who could be king to you, or not? There is not.

This is not a word forcing you to serve Jesus Christ as king against your will. It is asking you to think whether there is anyone besides Jesus Christ who could be your king.

In the Bible, the person who did not acknowledge the king as king was in the end put to death and stripped of all he had. Every word of the Bible is an important word and a word of life. It is not a mere story. It is a word that applies to everyone, born again or not.

Even a person not yet born again, if he acknowledges Jesus as King, believes just as he is taught when someone preaches and teaches him the word of God and understanding comes. And so this person finally enters into Jesus Christ. It is because he acknowledged Him as King. But what about the person who does not acknowledge Him as King? He is put to death and stripped of all he has.

Therefore, the born-again person must at least acknowledge the fact that Jesus Christ is King to him. It is not doing so under compulsion; it is simply the fact. Jesus Christ is King to the born-again. He is the Master. He is the Master who gives everything and the Master who saves from all sins. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

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The person who does the King's work is a blessed person

We live because of Jesus Christ the King, and we receive from Him the very reason we ought to live. Everything you have is what the King has given. If the King took it back, would you have the strength to obtain such things by your own power, or not? We are truly lacking and weak.

Nevertheless, this one fact has not changed: Jesus Christ is our King. As the year has passed we have gained much, lost much, and been through many things, but there is one thing unchanging in our hearts: that Jesus Christ is our King. That Jesus Christ has been King and has helped and watched over us, God's people. We are truly thankful.

And we have not the least regret in serving Jesus Christ as King, and no other thought at all. It is because Jesus Christ truly is King to you and me, and our Shepherd; He gives us everything, keeps everything for us, and leads us in the good way and the blessed way. It is because, as we send off this year and greet the new year, the Lord is the One who will give us everything. It is because that King is the good King who will grant everything according to our need.

This faith must not change. If perhaps you have not had Jesus Christ as King in your heart, if you have refused to serve Him as King, I want you even now to repent and turn, to tell Him you did wrong, and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ truly is King to you.

If you believe and acknowledge that fact, and always acknowledging the King as King in your heart you consult Him, make requests of Him, and ask His help, I know that the King will always give you, His people, much help. Jesus Christ is King. As King He is with us. Until our life ends, until the day

we finish living on this earth, and even in the new world, in the Millennial Kingdom, and in the eternal kingdom, Jesus Christ is our King forever. He is King even to those who are not born again.

The person who does God's work is a truly blessed person

We have come to know Jesus Christ as King. The King of whom we had only heard rumors, we came to meet within the gospel of the water and the Spirit; meeting that King, we became in reality the King's people, came to live inside His kingdom, and came to do the King's work in it.

To the person who does the King's work He gave one mina. He gave talents so that we would do the King's work. When we do the King's work, we eat with Him and He eats with us. When we do His work, He looks after us, fills us, and blesses us.

The person who does God's work is a truly blessed person. Why? Because he does the King's work. Because the King takes responsibility for everything, leads him, and keeps him. Because He does good to him in due season.

Do not think of serving the Lord and doing God's work as a loss. I want you not to have thoughts like the man who kept the one mina wrapped in a cloth and brought it back as it was—saying, you are an austere man; you try to reap from me without sowing.

When you offer your heart and serve the Lord even a little, the Lord who is King has repaid you with much more. And He repays still. The Lord is not a debt collector. He is not stingy. The Lord is not a creature but the Creator.

Receiving the ability the Lord gives and gaining the strength

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the Lord gives, doing this work and that, serving the Lord with what He has given—should we then be stingy?

As we send off the year, let us look back at our hearts. This past year, did we truly treat Jesus Christ the Master as King and acknowledge Him in our hearts? If we did, it is well; if we did not, then in the coming new year—from now on—let us serve Him as King. I have said that everything must be given by God, and that without His giving, nothing can be.

We receive what God gives, and with it we serve God, we ourselves live, and we enjoy gladness of heart. The Master of our life is not we ourselves but Jesus Christ. Sometimes we occupy the king's seat. But when you yourself occupy the king's seat and run everything your own way, your life becomes truly wretched. The road ahead does not open either.

But what happens when the Master becomes King? We become rich. Why? Because that King is rich. The heart becomes rich, good deeds become abundant, we come to do much of God's work, and we receive many blessings in spirit and in body.

Since Jesus Christ is the King of you and me, I want you to serve Him well as King in the new year also. I want you to serve Him truly with your heart. Though the flesh is lacking, my heart's desire is that we always serve Him well as King with our hearts. I know that such a heart is in your hearts as well.

In the new year, too, let us live well by faith. Let us look back at how much we have acknowledged Jesus Christ as King, believe again, and resolve that if anything is lacking, the faith that believes in Jesus Christ as King must come first—the heart that serves Him must be there.

I want God to give you the heart and the faith to serve Jesus Christ as King and regard Him as King forever. I want it to be in me as well. For this faith is the line of life and the line of blessing.

I say this word because the faith that serves Jesus Christ as King and acknowledges Him as King makes us blessed.

You and I have been somewhat lacking, yet I hope this will be a year in which we think of the King first, serve the King in our hearts, work for the King, earn money to serve the King, strive to carry out the King's commands, and, when we lack in our living, make requests of the King who is rich—a year in which King and subjects commune well. I want Him to give such blessing abundantly to you, to the Church that is the body of God, and to all His servants. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Let us become donkeys that bring refreshment to the Lord's heart

< Luke 19:28-40 >

"When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, saying, 'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, "Why are you loosing it?" thus you shall say to him, "Because the Lord has need of it."' So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, 'Why are you loosing the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord has need of him.' Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: '"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should

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keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.'"

I have in me a heart that longs for the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be preached to the whole world as soon as possible. I want the gospel to be preached so that the heart of God and our hearts may be refreshed together. The gospel of the water and the Spirit must be preached faster, and I often feel impatient. Still, the speed at which it is being preached has now become very fast. Book orders come in from many countries of the world—Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Britain, the United States, India—and every day the gospel is being delivered to no small number of people. It is a truly thankful thing. Yet when I think of the world's population of six billion, an eager desire arises: I wish we could preach to tens of thousands a day and finish preaching to all as soon as possible.

Many souls receive the books, but what we do feels as small as holding out one biscuit in front of an elephant. Still, we see that we keep being connected with people in each country who are seeking the gospel. Of course, a farmer does not sow seed and reap immediately. Even so, my heart is earnest in wanting the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be preached to the whole world more quickly.

The colt is a servant who serves the Lord

In today's passage Jesus said this to His disciples: If you go into the village opposite, you will find a colt tied on which no one has ever sat; loose it and bring it. If anyone asks why you are loosing it, He said, tell him that the Lord has need of it. When the disciples actually went and were about to loose the colt, its

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owners appeared and asked why they were loosing it. When the disciples answered that the Lord had need of it, the owners said no more, and the disciples brought the donkey. And when they threw their outer garments on the colt's back, set Jesus on it, and He was entering Jerusalem, the multitude that followed Jesus took off their outer garments, spread them on the road, and praised.

At this point, when the Pharisees told Him to silence His disciples, Jesus said, *"If these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."* Who does this colt point to? It points to the worker of God, the servant of God, who has received the remission of sin before Jesus Christ, been saved, and serves the Lord. The colt was in no position to receive such glory, yet this colt is used very preciously and receives glory as well.

The servant who refreshes the heart of the Lord and the servant who grieves it

This colt is the servant of God, and some servants refresh the heart of God while other servants grieve the heart of God. When we work together on this earth, some workers constantly refresh the hearts of those who go before them and the heart of God. But there are also those who are not so. They are those who seem busy and hard at work, yet in the end make things difficult for others and cause them anxiety.

In their own way they say they are doing well. But what is the difference? Those who cause anxiety do not do in faith what they are told from above; they decide everything in advance by their own thinking and only ask afterwards. Since they ask after everything is already decided, there is nothing to say but to go

ahead. But when someone truly consults and discusses a matter first, we can deliberate together and lead it together in a good direction. Those who refresh the heart of God and the hearts of those who go before them do not run ahead; following the direction the Church has set, they keep pace one step behind and work steadily, step by step. That is exactly the difference. I want you to become servants who truly refresh the heart of God.

A world indifferent to the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Looking at this world—are there many people who have received the remission of sin through our books? Those who have not are far more. Even hearing the same gospel, some people actually share the gospel, wanting to work on their own initiative, while others busily put only words first. It is the manner of: I will hand out the books, so do something for me. In the end it is a demand to be enabled to make money, to be bought a car, to be provided a house. The person who really works does not clamor like that. Wanting to share with others the very gospel of the water and the Spirit he himself received, he distributes as many books as are sent to him, applies for more, and works on quietly.

No one knows how many denominations there are even within this small country. The Christianity of the whole world has come in, and every kind of heresy has come in as well. So everyone is busy with his own affairs and has no interest in preaching the real gospel of God, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even when you put the gospel into their hands, they do not understand what it means; their hearts are elsewhere, so if you preach purely the word of God alone, they dislike it. But if

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you talk about how to succeed, how to live a good life without sinning—ways of putting forward human righteousness before God—they rather like it. How, then, can the gospel enter?

I wish the gospel would be preached powerfully as soon as possible, so that people would divide clearly into one of two camps—those who know and believe the gospel, and those who oppose it—and the heart of God would be refreshed. Someday such a day will come.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is being preached to the whole world

Since the seed has been sown in the field until now, I believe that before long souls will rise up in groups in many countries. Even in China and Russia, where preaching the gospel is so difficult, many books have already gone in and the gospel is being preached. There have been famous evangelists in the world, but even comparing in human terms, the amount of the gospel now being preached through us is incomparably greater than theirs. Yet before a world population of six billion, it still feels only small.

The books published in English are being translated and going out into the languages of many countries, and when we translate into only a few more languages, we will have translated into all the major languages of the world. We are also translating Romans, and Romans is the book of the Bible people most want to understand. But though many people talk about Romans, I have not yet seen a single person who, without adding his own thoughts, knew and conveyed the exact meaning of the text. People mostly fill Romans up with doctrines such as the doctrine of sanctification or the doctrine of predestination. I want people

to realize the gospel of the water and the Spirit through this book of Romans, so that the flame of the gospel rises up like a great volcano.

If that happens, how refreshed the heart of God will be! How good it would be if, all over the world, people knew and realized the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and praised God! Dear fellow believers, how good would that be? But just as Israel was the nation that least received Jesus, our country is the nation that least receives the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown, and this land is truly so.

Our people are a people whose emotional temperament is far stronger than their intellectual temperament. Rather than acting on knowledge, we often act swayed by feeling. So whether the Jehovah's Witnesses speak, or Mormonism speaks, or the Adventists speak, or Buddhism speaks, people remain simply indifferent, and even when the pure gospel is preached, they hardly open their hearts. But when someone possessed by a demon speaks in tongues and tells of mysterious experiences, they rather like it. It is truly a time when discernment is needed.

The books that go out most these days are the ones in English. They are being delivered evenly to many countries—the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, and others. The books we have published make plain the gospel of the water and the Spirit, deal with theological problems and the errors of the Pentecostal line, and preach what the righteousness of God is. I believe that those who receive that gospel will teach others in turn and raise up missionaries, and the gospel will be preached to the whole world and refresh the heart of God. I want this gospel to be preached as soon as possible.

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We cannot keep silent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

When this donkey carried Jesus into Jerusalem and the Pharisees told Him to silence His disciples, Jesus said, *"If these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."* God has given us the gospel, and knowing this gospel we cannot keep silent. We must preach it. The Bible is the book God gave us to read and understand. Until now it was sealed, but God has told us to open and see.

Now the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot be hidden from the whole world either. How could this gospel itself be hidden? We will surely preach to the whole world this gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus Christ came to this earth, took the sin of the world upon His own body by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross and died receiving the judgment for that sin, and rose again and saved us. Until now Christianity has only quarreled, fallen into legalism, doctrinalism, and denominationalism. But now this gospel is truly being preached.

Some people ask: then was the gospel not preached during the past one thousand nine hundred years? It was not preached. Dear fellow believers, in AD 313 religious freedom came to Rome, and around AD 600 Muhammad arose and founded Islam. When Islam arose, almost all the countries Christianity had entered passed over to Islam. The churches of Asia Minor, so active around AD 100, saw their region gradually turn into the Islamic sphere after Islam arose and spread, and now Christianity is hard to find there.

If you look at the scriptures of a certain new religion of our country, you cannot count how much they have quoted the Bible. Many religions have drawn on the Bible like this to fabricate

false doctrines. If people had believed the true gospel, how could they believe and still have sin, believe and still be in anguish every day, believe and still fail to realize the gospel of the water and the Spirit? All that while, the true gospel was not there.

Since the seed has been sown, we will surely reap

Now that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has risen up and is being preached, no one knows how much God rejoices. He makes us reap a harvest far greater than our labor. Who is there that preaches the gospel to more than a hundred foreigners a day? Counting the books we send, and their preaching the gospel in turn and gathering people on their own, the gospel reaches some three hundred people a day—about ten thousand a month. It is a truly thankful thing.

The Bible tells us not to lose heart after sowing the seed. It says we shall reap in due season. Would not a farmer be disappointed if the sprouts came up slowly after he sowed? When only a few scattered shoots come up, it is disappointing. But just as, to a man with only a few strands of hair left, each strand is precious beyond exchanging even for a diamond, so each soul gained like that is truly precious. When the seed is sown, someday the sprout surely comes up. When the rain falls, they shoot right up. So however hard it is and however hard the waiting, we must not lose heart.

Discern the falsehood that stirs the emotions

When the gospel is preached rightly, worship becomes quiet and peaceful, not a scene of pandemonium. But in some

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meetings they have people shout “Lord!” three times, and cry that the Holy Spirit is coming in through this door and through that door, and shout that God has healed some sick person today, so stand up. Then here and there people spring up like bamboo shoots, shouting that their diseases are healed. It is not that God cannot heal disease. But God never works in that way.

Without even speaking about faith, stirring people up to just receive blessings and then suddenly saying that God has done it—that is nothing but a show. In fact, in one meeting they even arranged beforehand with a man to say that a dead person had come back to life. The man himself protested: I did not die, so why do you tell me to say I died and came back to life? There was also a case where someone went to a man famous as a miracle-worker to be healed, and he said he would heal him if he gave him half his property. Laying on hands once and demanding half of another’s property—such a man is not a servant of God but a swindler.

When people’s emotions are worked up, they are made to pray aloud in unison, and then the offering is collected, even the most careful person cannot help opening his wallet because of the atmosphere and his standing. All such things are false meetings that collect money by exploiting human emotions. A person is born again purely through the word of God; one is never born again just by being told, believe, believe.

He said, *“You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32)*. Someone even advertised that if a person with a short leg receives the laying on of hands, the leg grows longer. But a leg is not a rubber band—how could it grow longer like that? It grew longer in feeling, not in reality. In the Bible, when the Lord healed the eyes of the blind man by anointing them with saliva, He said that the man was born blind so that the glory of God might be revealed. Our being born sinners, and our

carrying certain problems, are also for the glory of God; and for that glory to be revealed, we must believe the word of the Lord. We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and be born again.

Salvation does not come by fleshly visions, feelings, or experiencing miracles. I myself am a person who once had tremendous experiences. While I was still, fire seemed to fall from above with a rush, coming down as though paper were burning, seeming to burn up even the athlete's foot between my toes. From that day I quit the smoking I had not been able to quit, and my heart overflowed with elation and joy. When I saw the poor, the sick, and the demon-possessed, I wanted to lay hands on them, and when I laid on hands there were many works of demons going out. But do you know what that was? It was the work of demons. Demons make people believe in Jesus, work wonders, and even play the false prophet. But if to the end they keep a person from knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and from discovering the righteousness of God that the Bible speaks of, that person, though he believes in Jesus, does not reach salvation.

Let us become those who refresh the heart of God

This year, too, preparing many books, we have already reached September. To our eyes it seems slow, but in God's sight the work is advancing greatly. As the years go by, working becomes harder. The world economy is now collapsing, and our circumstances are not good either. But even at such a time, I believe God will give His Church material means and grace to be able to work. Therefore I want us to work diligently while we can work.

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If we are truly servants of God, we ought to have the heart to refresh the heart of God if we can. Rather than grieving the heart of God and putting off the work, I want us to work diligently and do it right away when God wants it. I know that next year we will be able to do a hundred, a thousand times more work than this year. I want to preach the gospel quickly.

Is it not so with you as well? If we can, let us, like the colt, become those who refresh the heart of God. The colt, tied up by men and unable to preach the gospel, the Lord told them to loose and bring. And He mounted it. If we are tied to this world and to men, we cannot be used when God wants to use us. Therefore, if the desire to truly serve the gospel arises in you through the Holy Spirit, examine what is binding you and untie that bond. Only when you are released from it can you be used by the Lord. A colt tied up at another's house cannot be ridden by Jesus even if He wants to ride it. It must be released. We must become people wholly offered to Christ.

When you read the passage, you already know what sermon I will preach. Yet as you hear it, your heart comes alive afresh. If the story of the colt feels familiar, I may speak about the stones that cry out, for the people of faith are all those stones. The one who has received the gospel cannot keep silent and comes to cry out. I want the gospel to be preached as though bursting forth mightily like a volcano.

I believe that someday, in the very place where the seed has been sown, the sprout will come up and grow and surely bear fruit. Knowledge, truth, and the believing heart are connected with one another. Faith comes by hearing, and when we hear the word, the heart comes alive with faith. I want the gospel to be preached to the whole world as soon as possible, and I want us to become those who refresh the heart of God. I want God to make us so. Now let us pray before God, sing praise, and close. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

We must testify to what the Lord has done

< Luke 19:28-41 >

"When He had said this, He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. And it came to pass, when He drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mountain called Olivet, that He sent two of His disciples, saying, 'Go into the village opposite you, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring it here. And if anyone asks you, "Why are you loosing it?" thus you shall say to him, "Because the Lord has need of it."' So those who were sent went their way and found it just as He had said to them. But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, 'Why are you loosing the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord has need of him.' Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road. Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: '"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!' And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' But He answered and said to them, 'I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.' Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it"

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The colt refers to you and me, and the outer garments to what the Lord has done

The life lived as the Lord's worker leads on to believing and proclaiming the things the Lord did for us when He came to this earth, and to revealing the glory of God. That work has continued without ceasing. The disciples loosed and brought a colt on which no one had yet sat. They did according to the word: if the owners ask why you are loosing it, say, *"Because the Lord has need of it."* The disciples brought that colt to Jesus, threw their outer garments on the donkey's back, and set Jesus on it, and they took off their outer garments and spread them on the road. In fact, the life in which we believe in and meet the Lord, receive the remission of sin, become workers, and live carrying the Lord is exactly like this.

What does this tell us? It means that we testify to and proclaim the glorious things the Lord did when He came to this earth for you and me, for all mankind. That He loved us and saved us from sin; that He saved all mankind from sin; that the Lord is God the Creator; that He blesses us; that He works until all who have not yet come in have come in; the fact that He has been with us and blessed us in all this work of serving Him—the ones who proclaim these things are precisely you and me. This colt refers to you and me, and the outer garments refer to the things the Lord did when He came to this earth. Therefore, those who have become disciples of Jesus Christ are the ones who proclaim and reveal the things the Lord did in coming to this earth and saving all mankind, and you and me, from sin.

The disciples laid their outer garments on the donkey, spread their clothes on the road Jesus was taking, and praised God: *"The King who comes in the name of the LORD!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" (Luke 19:38).*

Let us read verse 38 together: *"Saying: '"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!'"* I used to think that this praise—peace in heaven and glory to God in the highest—appeared only in the earlier part of the Gospels, at the birth of Jesus. But reading today's passage, at His entry into Jerusalem also they are praising, *"The King who comes in the name of the LORD!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"*

The ones singing this praise are the disciples of Jesus. Not only the disciples but the great multitude following Jesus praise like this. *"Blessed"*—that is, it means praising God. The King who comes in the name of the Lord—calling Jesus King means that Jesus is God. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

Jesus Christ our King came to this earth and took upon Himself the sins of His people; our sins passed on to Him, and He received the judgment for those sins, rose from the dead, and saved us, and so we have been saved through faith. Thus we obtained peace. In the old days, because of sin, God the Father and we were enemies, but now reconciliation has been made. So there is peace in heaven and glory in the highest, and all of this has become the glory of God.

What we must do is testify to the things the Lord has done

This is what the Lord did when He came to this earth. Then what is the work for the disciples of Jesus and for you and me living in this present age? It is to testify to the things the Lord has done. He has had us testify that the Lord came to this earth in a human body and saved us; that He took upon Himself our sins; that He received the judgment; that He rose again and gave

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us new life and everlasting life; that whenever we serve the gospel and pray, He has answered and blessed us; that He has granted us the kingdom of heaven and the heaven to come; and that He has given these blessings not only to us but to believers in all the world. This is precisely what we must do.

We do not preach ourselves; we preach that the Lord came to us, saved us, loved us, and blessed us. Moreover, that He makes us serve the gospel so that even the sheep who have not yet come in may all come in, and that He has us work fairly and squarely and convey His will—this is peace in heaven and glory to God on earth. But in today's passage the Pharisees became angry. When the disciples praised Jesus, saying, peace in heaven and glory to God on earth, they were angry. At that time Israel was living like slaves as a colony of Rome, so strictly speaking their king was the emperor of Rome. Yet Jesus was being called King, so they were angry. But Jesus Christ truly is the King of kings and God.

"If these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out"

The disciples had only spoken the fact as it was, yet the Pharisees said, *"Rebuke Your disciples" (Luke 19:39)*, thinking that the disciples were doing something that could bring on serious trouble. In fact, it was because of such things that Jesus suffered the calamity of being seized by the Roman soldiers and nailed to the Cross. Nevertheless Jesus said, *"I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke 19:40)*. I made the universe and created man; when My people fell into sin, I put on a human body and came to this earth to save them, received baptism from John the Baptist and took

on their sins, and bearing that sin of the world I was nailed to the Cross, accomplished all the judgment against sin, died and rose again and saved them—if the disciples and those who follow the Lord do not proclaim this fact but keep silent, the stones will cry out: that is the meaning. The Lord can have it testified in any number of other ways as well.

Even without you, even without the disciples, the Lord can do it any time. It means that no one can stop what the Lord has done. This is also a word spoken to us who live in later generations. Those who believe that the Lord is our Savior will cry aloud the glory of the Lord, the peace of heaven, and the glory of God. No one can stop the saved from testifying to what the Lord did when He came to this earth. Rather, the more it is blocked, the more they cry out, praise God, and give glory to God.

Jesus is the Master of our life and the main character of all history

In the word we have seen today there appears a scene that at first glance seems contrary to reason. Jesus tells His disciples to loose and bring the colt tied in the opposite village. Then did Jesus order them to steal? Yet Jesus commands them so. The disciples were alarmed—what if we are caught loosing it?—but they did according to the word: if anyone asks why you are loosing it, say, *"Because the Lord has need of it"*; and the owners of the donkey, hearing that word, let them go without a word. What does this mean? Jesus is the King of kings and the One who created the universe; He is the Master of you and me and the One who made us; He is the King of you and me, God, and the Savior. Jesus is the One who can govern even the hearts of all people.

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Therefore the Lord worked in this way at that time in order to tell us the things He did when He came to this earth and the things that will yet be accomplished. In the Bible there are many things hard to understand by human reason alone. The parting of the Red Sea; the flowing water of the Jordan River stopping and piling up like a mountain upstream while the ground below dried up—these are such things. This speaks precisely of the remission of sin. Since mankind began, sin has never once ceased flowing; sin has given birth to sin and has flowed on without end. But after Jesus came, He made that sin be cut off. This does not mean that we human beings no longer sin.

It means that the Lord took all those sins fully upon Himself and removed them completely. How amazing this is! If you try to understand this with your head alone, you cannot. But if you accept it with faith in God, it is fully understandable. For example, when Peter and the disciples were crossing to the other side by boat and met a storm, and the boat was filling with water and they were about to die, Jesus came walking on the water. And He said, *"It is I; do not be afraid,"* got into the boat, and told the storm to be still, and it became still. There is a fact the Bible makes plain again and again through such events: Jesus is the Creator, God, and the Master of every place.

Jesus is the Master of our life and the main character of all history. The history of this universe is entirely the history of Jesus Christ, the history of God, the history of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He raised the dead, and taking the disciples of Jesus, who had neither learning nor ability, He preached the gospel and took hold of Rome with the gospel in that age. Even now God is taking hold of the whole world with the gospel through us. In fact, in this age there is no one who preaches this gospel except you and me, the born-again. Do the leaders of this nation serve and preach this gospel?

They never preach it. Do the rich preach it? Do scientists preach it? Do artists preach it? Only you and I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, preach it. No one else preaches it. The ones who testify to this gospel—the fact of peace in heaven and glory to God on earth—are precisely this colt, that is, you and me today. We are revealing and preaching the things God has done—how amazing this is!

The peace enjoyed only by those who have met God

It said, peace in heaven. Truly, after our Lord came, we obtained peace. Only after the Lord came could we know that God is the glorious One who saves mankind from sin and gives the kingdom of heaven, the God of love and the Shepherd of love, the One in whom there is no evil at all. Without going through Jesus, we could not know what kind of being God is. So the people of the world say: Does God really exist? If God exists, why does He leave those who try to live good lives to suffer? If God existed, would He leave this world as it is, where the evil prosper and the good are ruined? But in fact it is not because God does not exist; it is because God exists that He is permitting such things.

It is because man never seeks God unless he suffers, and does not call on God unless his heart is empty. So God permits man suffering to make him return to Him, and when a man returns, from then on He embraces, protects, blesses, and keeps him, and gives him the eternal life to come. That is what God does.

We have met the Lord. How is it with you since you met the Lord? Among us there are still many whose faith is not yet complete. But the Lord will wait a long time. I said in the

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daytime as well: knowledge is knowing, and wisdom is applying what one knows to oneself and gaining the benefit. Even a person with knowledge, even a clever person, is nothing with that alone; one must have wisdom. If Jesus did something in the word of God, and one does not apply it to oneself and believe that He did that very thing for me, what Jesus did has no effect for him. Knowing and applying-and-believing are different. So there are truly many who know only in their heads. How many people in the world are called clever! But if one does not apply the word to oneself and believe, one gains no benefit.

Therefore we must apply to ourselves and believe the things the Lord has done. When we believe that fact, we receive the remission of sin, obtain peace of heart, and come to live for the glory of God. How glorious this is! God alone is good. God does no evil and is neither impure nor wicked. Those who have not met that God cannot but remain in suffering. But those who have met God, met the Church, and want to live according to God's will live within the peace God gives. The heart is truly at rest, and they live doing worthwhile work for the glory of God. How thankful a thing this is!

Only when we break our stubbornness can we follow the Lord

Who would have known that the colt is precisely you and me? A donkey is stubborn. I did not know this well, not being from the countryside; but when we bought a donkey from far away and tried to put it into the donkey shed, it would not follow even when we pulled the halter. However hard the brothers tried it was no use, so we tied the halter to an excavator and pulled; the donkey braced itself and was dragged along, but still would not

follow. I had not known how stubborn it could be.

The Old Testament speaks of breaking the neck of a donkey's colt. The stubbornness must be broken. Unless a man breaks the evil stubbornness inherited from his parents, he cannot follow God. Unless one yields one's heart, one cannot follow God. That day, since dragging by force was no use, we said, let us not drag it by force but try speaking to it; we picked a leaf from a kudzu vine nearby, put it in its mouth, and stroked it gently. We soothed it: 'So you have come for the first time today; you have had a hard journey. We have made a good house for you, and that is where we are taking you.'

Then we untied the excavator's line, and when a man took the halter, the donkey followed in quite meekly. This was the donkey that, once it turned stubborn, would not move even when dragged by an excavator. A donkey is not dull-witted. If you speak gently, it understands the meaning. It followed because we soothed it, telling it that we had made a house for it and meant to feed it. We are the same. We must yield our hearts when we receive salvation, and we must have our hearts broken also when we follow the Lord after being saved. We human beings are extremely stubborn—worse than a donkey.

Once a man considers himself right and his thinking hardens in one direction, he listens to no one and tries to go only his own way. He tries to go even on a road the Lord does not want. The Lord says: not that road, but this one. He says: if you live for Me, I will take responsibility for your life, your future, and everything. But man says: I have already received the remission of sin, so I will earn my own living and manage well on my own. Yet however much money one earns, one cannot always be happy. When a person who has received the remission of sin leaves the church, he cannot hear the word of God, cannot worship God, cannot live a life of praise and prayer and serving

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God—and that in itself is a curse.

He says: 'You have received salvation, but the way to receive blessing is to worship before God, pray, praise, and obey in the work God has entrusted to you. Even for the righteous, I cannot bless apart from the word of God preached in the church.' So He tells us to listen, yet man is stubborn. We must break our own stubbornness. I too am quite a stubborn man. Even my face looks stubborn.

In the old days I was very rough among men. When I saw those who did not live fairly and squarely but stole what belonged to others or robbed, with no thought for others, I would go all over the country rebuking them harshly with rough words and despising them. But after I met the Lord, I too yielded my heart. If the Lord desires it and the Lord gains benefit, if the Lord's will is accomplished and He receives glory and another person receives salvation, I gladly yield my heart. It is saying: 'Lord, from now on I am a fool. I will do whatever You say, so command me.' If He tells me to bow my head even before children, I bow; if He tells me to speak gently, I speak gently. Only, even if the whole world rushes at me, I say that what is not right is not right, and what is right is right. Because I too broke my heart before the Lord and followed Him, I am today, lacking as I am, serving the gospel together with you.

But I also see people of God who, though they have received the remission of sin and believe the gospel, have not yet broken the heart of their flesh, and struggle in a spiritual battle between the way that follows the desires of the flesh and the way that follows God. The person who breaks his heart much receives much of God's love. If one does not know how to break one's heart, one is nothing. Breaking one's heart before men seems servile and despised, but yielding our hearts before Jesus Christ is our glory and glory to God as well. To break our hearts in

obedience and follow before the precious One with whom we cannot dare compare ourselves is a truly blessed thing. In this way the colt carries many spiritual meanings for us. He said that if we keep silent, the stones will cry out—so the people of faith cry out. Through us, through the collected editions and the books in the languages of many nations, God is preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world.

We are living glorious lives, used in the work of God

How glorious a life we are living! Jesus rides on our backs and tells us: do this work, do that work. Do you know why we work fairly and squarely to serve the gospel? It is so as not to defraud, steal, or rob. I have heard it passed on that some among the evangelicals say, where I am not present, that I work and run a business like this because I have no faith.

But it is those who, in ways that are not fair and square, sell medicine worth two or three thousand won for twenty or thirty million won, taking exorbitant profit, who rather condemn us. That we work with our own hands, earn money fairly and squarely, and with what we gather print books and send them out is glory to God and a work that brings peace to people's hearts. God's people do not serve the gospel by doing evil, stealing, and defrauding. Serving by working altogether fairly and squarely—that is glory to God. How glorious this is! In every department, in many ways, we labor at this work, and only the person who breaks his own heart can carry out this work.

Only the one who loves the Lord can do this work. How joyful and glorious it is to convey to people what the Lord has done! It is easy to say that the Lord has removed all your sins,

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and there is no self-interest in it. There is never any such thing as preaching this gospel and then saying: you were saved through me, so give your offering to me. We preach the gospel without expecting any recompense. For He said, Freely you have received, freely give.

We are truly living a glorious life. That is what I think—what about you? That my eyes grow dim with age and this or that part of my body is not well is a passing matter; I will live until the day the Lord calls me. Being used in the work of God—how glorious it is! Even at the work site, I am not ashamed to move the stones lying in the path and to support the brothers from behind. I do not order people about; after the goal is set, I discuss with the brothers, and we decide on the better way and work. The skilled hands are all our brothers, so I help them from behind, watching over them and looking after them so that they are not hurt.

This construction, too, will soon be finished and the building completed. From long ago—from the time I met the Lord—I have cherished the thought that I must preach the gospel and do literature ministry, preparing one thing after another and gathering what was needed. When the time comes, we accomplish them one by one—how glorious it is! Truly it is glory to God and peace in our hearts. Dear fellow believers, are your hearts at ease? Though we are lacking, how peaceful and at rest we are, serving the Lord in the Church and living in the Lord! Try living out in the world. Just hearing the news, you have no idea how anxious you become. People say the economy has grown hard and no one can know what lies ahead. In such a world, how could anyone bear that life by his own strength alone? Being clever is not what carries you through. Cleverness is nothing; one must have wisdom. And wisdom is obtained only when God gives it. I give thanks before the Lord, who has let us live serving Him so gloriously. ✉

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CHAPTER

20

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Luke Chapter 20

Part 1. Understanding the text passage by passage and its gospel-based interpretation

Luke chapter 20 begins with the question of the religious leaders who refuse to acknowledge the authority of Jesus, and continues with the parable of the wicked vinedressers, the taxes paid to Caesar, the resurrection of the dead, the identity of Christ, and the word about the hypocrisy of the scribes. We will examine each text in turn through the general interpretation of its context and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. The religious leaders who question the authority of Jesus (20:1–8)

"Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him and spoke to Him, saying, 'Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?' But He answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven," He will say, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "From men," all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.' So they answered that they did not know where it was from. And Jesus

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said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'"

General interpretation of the text

While Jesus is teaching the gospel in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders come and ask by what authority He does these things. This was a challenge to the authority of Jesus, who had cleansed the temple and was teaching there.

Jesus asks them in return whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. If they acknowledged John as a prophet of God, they also had to accept the authority of Jesus, to whom John had testified.

But rather than seeking the truth, the leaders calculate their own political position. If they said it was from heaven, they would have to take responsibility for not believing John; and if they said it was from men, they had to fear the people who believed John was a prophet.

When they answer that they do not know, Jesus also does not tell them where His authority comes from. This was not evading the question; it exposed their stubbornness in refusing to acknowledge Him even after seeing sufficient evidence.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The authority of Jesus is connected with the baptism of John

When Jesus taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders asked by

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what authority He was doing these things. They did not ask because they wanted to know the truth; they wanted to stop Jesus, whom they had not approved, from teaching in the temple.

Jesus asked them in return whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. The religious leaders did not answer, for if they acknowledged John as a prophet sent by God they would be rebuked for not believing his words, and if they said it was from men they feared the backlash of the people. They regarded the reactions of people and their own positions as more important than God.

It is very important that Jesus connected His own authority with the baptism of John. John the Baptist was a man sent by God, and by baptizing Jesus he revealed Him to Israel. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus fulfilled all the righteousness of God, and after receiving that baptism He was testified to as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus is not someone who received religious credentials from men and then carried out the work of salvation. He is in His essence God, the Creator, and the Judge. Jesus, who is God, came in the flesh of a man to save sinners, and with the baptism He received from John He took upon Himself all our sins. Therefore, to acknowledge the authority of Jesus is to acknowledge that He is God and the Savior who fulfilled the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

2. The parable of the wicked vinedressers (20:9–19)

"*Then He began to tell the people this parable: 'A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. Now at vintage-time he sent a*

servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out. 'Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him." But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.' And when they heard it they said, 'Certainly not!' Then He looked at them and said, 'What then is this that is written: "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone"? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.' And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people—for they knew He had spoken this parable against them."

General interpretation of the text

A man entrusts his vineyard to vinedressers and leaves for a long time. When the time comes, he sends servants to receive some of the fruit, but the vinedressers beat the servants, treat them shamefully, and send them away empty-handed.

Finally the owner sends his beloved son, thinking that they will respect him. But the vinedressers cast the son out of the vineyard and kill him in order to seize the vineyard.

In the parable, the owner of the vineyard refers to God, the

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servants to the prophets God sent, and the beloved son to Jesus. The vinedressers represent the leaders who had been given the responsibility of caring for the people of God but treated that charge as their own possession and rejected the will of God.

The owner judges the wicked vinedressers and entrusts the vineyard to others. This does not mean abandoning the whole Jewish nation; it is a warning that the responsibility would be taken from the unfaithful leaders and entrusted to people who are faithful to God and bear fruit.

Jesus quotes the word of the Psalms that the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. Though the leaders reject Jesus, God will establish Him as the center of the history of salvation. The person who rejects Jesus will in the end face the judgment of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The rejected Son became the chief cornerstone of salvation

The owner made the vineyard and entrusted it to the vinedressers. The vinedressers were not the owners of the vineyard but people entrusted with its care. Yet they beat, insulted, and drove out the servants the owner sent. When the owner finally sent his beloved son, they killed the heir and tried to make the vineyard their own.

In this parable, the owner of the vineyard represents God, the servants the prophets God sent, and the beloved son Jesus Christ. The vinedressers refer to the religious leaders who regarded the people God had entrusted to them as their own possession and rejected the prophets. They should have served the word and the righteousness of God, but to protect their own positions and

authority they even tried to kill the Son of God.

But Jesus, who was rejected by men, became the chief cornerstone that God established. Even though the religious leaders cast Jesus out of the vineyard and nailed Him to the Cross, they could not overthrow the plan of salvation of God.

The Cross of Jesus was not a failure that came upon Him suddenly. Because Jesus had already taken upon Himself our sins with the baptism He received from John, He went to the Cross bearing those sins. On the Cross He received in our place the judgment of sin, and by rising from the dead He completed salvation. The Son whom men rejected rose again and became the chief cornerstone of salvation and the King of kings.

To the person who believes in this stone, Jesus becomes the foundation of salvation; but to the person who rejects Him to the end, He becomes the stone of judgment. The saved must not regard the Church of God and the gospel as their own possession, but must know them as things entrusted to them, and must bear the fruit of faith and gospel preaching that pleases God.

3. The question of paying taxes to Caesar (20:20–26)

"So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. Then they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, 'Why do you test Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?' They answered and said, 'Caesar's.'

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And He said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent."

General interpretation of the text

The religious leaders send people disguised as righteous men in order to catch Jesus in His words. They ask whether it is right to pay taxes to Caesar, the Roman emperor.

If He said to pay the taxes, He could incur the resentment of the people who hated Roman rule; and if He said not to pay, He could be accused as a rebel against Rome. It was a trap designed to put Jesus in danger whichever way He answered.

Jesus asks whose image and inscription are on the denarius. When the people answer that they are Caesar's, Jesus says, *"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."*

This does not mean unconditional obedience to everything the state demands, nor does it mean completely separating faith from social life. It means that while carrying out social duties, our ultimate loyalty and worship must be given to God.

The coin bears the image of Caesar, but man was created in the image of God. Therefore, though taxes may be given to Caesar, a person's life, conscience, and worship belong to God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Our hearts and lives must be given to God

The religious leaders sent spies to catch Jesus in His words.

It was a trap: if He said that taxes should be paid to Caesar, they would attack Him for betraying the nation; and if He said not to pay them, they would accuse Him before the Roman governor.

Jesus knew their craftiness and asked whose image and inscription were on the denarius. After hearing the answer that they were Caesar's, He said to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

While living in the world, the saints must pay just taxes, respect law and order, and faithfully carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them. But they must not serve the power and material things of the world as if they were God. Even the authority of Caesar is not eternal, and it cannot stand above God.

If the image and inscription of Caesar were engraved on the coin, man is a being made in the image of God. Therefore, material things may be used to carry out our responsibilities in the world, but our hearts, lives, and faith must be given to God. We are God's because we were created by Him, and we are God's also because we have been redeemed by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not evade their responsibilities toward the world. At the same time, they do not serve money and power as their master, but serve God who saved them as their true King.

4. The resurrection and the question of the seven brothers (20:27–40)

"*Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: 'Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife,*

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and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.' Jesus answered and said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.' Then some of the scribes answered and said, 'Teacher, You have spoken well.' But after that they dared not question Him anymore."

General interpretation of the text

The Sadducees, who claim that there is no resurrection, ask Jesus a question about one woman and seven brothers. It was a question that used the Old Testament institution—in which, if a brother died without children, another brother married his wife and continued his line—to make the resurrection look like a contradiction.

They ask whose wife the woman will be in the resurrection if seven brothers married the same woman in turn and all died.

Jesus answers that the life of the resurrection is not an

extension of the present order of this world. Those who are raised do not die anymore, so marriage for continuing descendants is not needed either. Being equal to the angels does not mean that people turn into angels, but that they are no longer under the dominion of death.

Jesus cites the event of Moses at the burning bush, where God called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Since God is not the God of the dead but of the living, the relationship of those who are in covenant with Him does not end with death.

Some of the scribes acknowledged that Jesus' answer was right, and His opponents did not dare to question Him any longer.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The resurrection is promised to the saints who have received the remission of sin

The Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, made up the story of seven brothers and one woman to test Jesus. They tried to make the resurrection look contradictory by using an institution recorded in the law of Moses. They applied the marriage relationship of this world unchanged to the world after the resurrection.

Jesus said that life after the resurrection is not a repetition of the present physical life. The children of the resurrection cannot die anymore; they are equal to the angels and live as children of God. There is no death, no decay, and no suffering of sin there.

That God called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob also testifies to the resurrection. Though they died in the flesh, they are alive before God. God is not the God of the dead but the God of the living, and He will surely raise His people again.

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The resurrection of Jesus guarantees the resurrection of the saints. Jesus took upon Himself our sins with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus was not an event that happened to Him alone; it is the firstfruits showing that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have received the remission of sin will also rise again.

Therefore, the remission of sin and the resurrection cannot be separated. For the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, everything does not end with death. When the Lord comes again, he will be raised with a new body and live forever in the kingdom of God. Conversely, the person who has rejected salvation to the end will also rise for judgment, so the problem of sin must be solved while one is alive.

5. Christ, the Son of David and the Lord of David (20:41–44)

"And He said to them, 'How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Therefore David calls Him "Lord"; how is He then his Son?'"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus asks why people call the Christ only the Son of David. According to the promise of the Old Testament, the expectation that the Messiah would come as a descendant of David was right.

But Jesus quotes the word in Psalm 110 where David calls the Messiah his *"Lord."* Then the Messiah must be not merely a descendant of David but One higher than David.

Jesus shows that He is the Messiah who continues the line of David and at the same time possesses authority and standing that go beyond a secular political leader. The identity of Christ cannot be explained by human lineage and political expectations alone.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Jesus is God, the Lord of David

People knew that the Christ would come as the Son of David. Jesus did in fact come to this earth in the flesh through the lineage of David. But we must not know Christ only as a human being born as a descendant of David.

David, moved by the Holy Spirit, called Christ his Lord. Christ is in the flesh the Son of David, but in His essence He is God who created David. Jesus is true man and at the same time true God.

Jesus, who is God, came in the body of a man in order to save sinners. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all mankind; He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross; and He rose from the dead. And He ascended and sat down at the right hand of God.

Jesus is not one of many excellent religious leaders or prophets. He is the High Priest who saves sinners, the King who rules the whole world, and God who will judge all people in the future. Therefore, the word and the salvation of Jesus must not be treated as one of many human claims.

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6. Beware of the hypocrisy of the scribes (20:45–47)

"Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, 'Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.'"

General interpretation of the text

In the hearing of all the people, Jesus tells His disciples to beware of the scribes. This was not condemning all scribes equally; it was a warning against the attitude of the leaders who used their religious positions for their own gain.

They went around in long robes and loved respectful greetings, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts. They regarded being recognized and exalted by people as more important than serving God.

They also devoured the property of widows while outwardly making long prayers. Since widows were representative of the weak who needed protection in those days, exploiting them was a grave betrayal of the responsibility entrusted to leaders.

Religious knowledge and authority must be used to care for the weak. The person who uses them for honor and greed will receive a more severe judgment, as great as the responsibility he has received.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The saved must serve weak souls

The scribes liked to go around in long robes, to be greeted in the marketplaces, and to sit in the high seats in the synagogues and at feasts. They wanted to appear to people as godly men of authority. Yet they devoured the property of widows, who should have been cared for, and made long prayers in pretense to look godly.

God is not One who looks only at robes, offices, and the length of prayers. He looks at what a person believes in his heart and for what he uses his authority. The person who knows the word of God must protect weak souls and preach the gospel of life to them. If he uses religious authority to oppress people and seek his own gain, he receives a heavier judgment.

Jesus walked the exact opposite path from the scribes. He did not take high seats or exploit sinners; He who was without sin received baptism to take upon Himself our sins, and He gave Himself up on the Cross. This is the love of God who served sinners.

The person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not make his office and knowledge his own boast. Remembering that he too was saved only by the grace of the Lord, he must protect weak souls and serve them with the gospel.

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Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 20 conveys

In Luke chapter 20, the religious leaders did not acknowledge the authority of Jesus, and like the wicked vinedressers they rejected the Son of God. The spies tried to catch Jesus in His words, the Sadducees denied the resurrection, and the scribes hid pride and greed behind an outward form of godliness.

Their common problem was that they exalted their own thoughts, positions, and religious righteousness above the word of God. Because they did not believe the ministry of John the Baptist, they did not know the meaning of the baptism Jesus received from John either, and in the end they rejected the Son of God who had come to save them.

Jesus is true man who came as the Son of David and at the same time God who is the Lord of David. With the baptism He received from John He took upon Himself all our sins, He received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and He rose from the dead. Jesus, who was rejected by men, became the chief cornerstone of salvation and the Lord of the living.

We must lay down our own religious righteousness and know and believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled. And we must render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's while giving our hearts and lives to God, and live serving the gospel and weak souls in the hope of the resurrection. ✉

Part 2. An expository sermon
following the text passage by passage

Jesus who taught salvation and the resurrection

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 we examined each passage of Luke chapter 20 side by side through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at the authority of Jesus, the unbelief that rejected the Son of God, the life that must be given to God, the hope of the resurrection, and the true identity of Christ.

The dispute over the authority of Jesus, the parable of the vinedressers, the question of paying taxes to Caesar, the question of the Sadducees about the resurrection, and the warning against the scribes are not words separated from one another. All these words show that Jesus is the Savior who came from God, and that man must lay down his religious authority and his own thoughts and believe in the salvation and the resurrection He accomplished.

The expository sermons that follow trace the flow of the text and examine how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took upon Himself the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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Jesus who preached the gospel with the authority of God

"Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him and spoke to Him, saying, 'Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?' But He answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven," He will say, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "From men," all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.' So they answered that they did not know where it was from. And Jesus said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'" (Luke 20:1–8).

"By what authority are You doing these things"

After Jesus drove out those who were doing business in the temple, He taught the people daily and preached the gospel. The Lord, who had driven out those who had made the temple a place of their own gain, filled that place with the word of God and the gospel of salvation. Jesus cleansing the temple and teaching the people was not a religious activity begun with human permission; it was what the Son of God, the owner of the temple who had come to save sinners, did with His own authority.

The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders asked Jesus by what authority He was doing these things and who had given Him that authority. They did not ask in order to believe and obey

the word of the Lord. When the authority and teaching of Jesus exposed their wrongs and their religious authority, they questioned Him in order to oppose Him. Their desire to protect their own positions and influence came before seeking the will of God.

"The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?"

Jesus did not answer them directly but asked, *"The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?"* This question revealed whether what John did was a work God had commanded, and where the authority and the gospel of Jesus, to whom John testified, came from. God sent John to prepare the way of the Lord and to make known salvation through the remission of sin. Therefore, if they acknowledged John as a prophet sent by God, they also had to receive Jesus, to whom he testified, as the Christ.

The words *"The baptism of John"* in this text refer to the whole ministry of John, and at its center is the baptism he gave to Jesus at the Jordan River. God established John, born of the priestly house of Aaron, as the representative of mankind. John the Baptist baptized Jesus, and with that baptism Jesus took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. And John testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Therefore, to believe that the baptism of John came from heaven is to accept the work of righteousness God accomplished through John and Jesus. That the religious leaders did not believe John meant rejecting Jesus, to whom he testified, and the righteousness of salvation God had appointed.

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The religious leaders did not seek what was true but calculated the answer that would be advantageous to them. If they said it was from heaven, they would be rebuked for not believing John; and if they said it was from men, they feared that the people who acknowledged John as a prophet would stone them. Their reply that they *"did not know where it was from"* was not a humble confession of ignorance but an answer of unbelief that refused to believe the testimony God had already given.

Jesus is not One who must borrow authority from men. He is God who has been from the beginning, the Creator who made heaven and earth and mankind. The authority to judge and to remit sin, the authority to raise the dead and to give eternal life, belongs to Jesus. His cleansing of the temple and His preaching of the gospel to the people were also done with the absolute authority of the Son of God.

At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken upon Himself all the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. He was now walking the way to bear those sins to the Cross, to shed His blood and die under the judgment of sin, and to rise from the dead on the third day and complete salvation. Even though the religious leaders did not acknowledge the authority of the Lord, the saving work God had appointed did not stop.

Today we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed. Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received all the punishment of those sins with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose again to conquer sin and death. The person who believes this gospel in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God.

To believe in the authority of Jesus is not merely to respect Him as an excellent teacher or religious leader. It is to acknowledge that Jesus is the Creator God and the Christ who saved sinners, and to lay down one's own thoughts before the word He fulfilled with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes in the salvation Jesus completed just as it is receives the remission of sin and eternal life under His authority.

Those who have received the authority to preach the gospel to the whole world

To the person who has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the authority and mission to preach the gospel to the whole world are given. This authority does not come from a person's education and fame or from the recognition of a denomination. It is the authority God has given so that the person who believes the gospel Jesus fulfilled and has received the Holy Spirit may live as a witness of Christ according to the written word.

The worker of the gospel must not try to dominate people or exalt his own authority, but must convey exactly the salvation Jesus accomplished. The authority of gospel preaching is not worldly power that forces its own words on others; it is authority to serve the word of God, which brings sinners to life. The saints must not fear the recognition or the opposition of men, but must boldly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled with His baptism, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection.

Today as well, if we put religious tradition, office, and people's evaluations before the word of God, we fall into the

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same unbelief as the leaders of that day. If we first calculate how people will react rather than whether the word is true, we end up evading the truth we know, saying that we "do not know." Faith is not choosing the advantageous answer while watching people's faces; it is acknowledging the authority of God and obeying His word from the heart.

Luke chapter 20 verses 1–8 show that the authority of Jesus and the gospel of the water and the Spirit came from God. Jesus is God; He took upon Himself the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation. The person who has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by believing this gospel must preach the word of salvation to the whole world with the authority and mission received from God.

Jesus who was rejected and became the chief cornerstone of salvation

"Then He began to tell the people this parable: 'A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out. 'Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him." But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." So they

cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.' And when they heard it they said, 'Certainly not!' Then He looked at them and said, 'What then is this that is written: "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone"? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.'" (Luke 20:9–18).

"I will send my beloved son"

Jesus spoke this parable to the people after the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders had opposed His authority. A man made a vineyard, entrusted it to vinedressers, stayed in a far country for a long time, and when the time came to receive the fruit, he sent a servant three times in turn. The vineyard belonged to the owner, and the vinedressers were stewards who had to manage what was entrusted to them and return to the owner the fruit that was due.

The owner of the vineyard refers to God, and the vineyard shows Israel, to whom God entrusted His word, His covenant, and His worship. The vinedressers refer to the leaders entrusted with the responsibility of caring for the people of God and leading them with the word. God had them serve the people with the word so that the people would believe God and bear the fruit of righteousness.

The servants the owner sent represent the prophets God sent to Israel. God sent His servants again and again so that the people would turn from sin and believe the word, but the vinedressers beat them, treated them shamefully, and drove them out. This was despising the longsuffering of God and continually

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refusing the opportunity to repent—an unbelief that finally brought the settling of accounts and judgment.

Finally the owner of the vineyard said, *"I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him."* This beloved son is Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son whom God the Father sent into the world. God did not send only the prophets; at the last He sent His own Son to preach the word and to save sinners.

But the vinedressers did not respect the son even when they saw him. They reasoned, *"This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours."* The people who should have served the owner of the vineyard tried instead to seize the owner's rights and make the vineyard their own. This exposes the unbelief of the religious leaders who treated the people and the temple of God as possessions for their own power and gain, and who tried to remove Jesus, the true heir.

The vinedressers cast the beloved son out of the vineyard and killed him. This word points to Jesus being rejected in Jerusalem, dragged outside the city, and crucified. Jesus already knew the death that was coming upon Him. At the very time the religious leaders were seeking to kill Him, the Lord revealed in advance through this parable both their sin and His own death.

The stone which the builders rejected became the chief cornerstone

Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. And bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and rose again on the third day

to complete salvation. Though the wicked intent of the vinedressers brought the Lord to death, Jesus gave up His own life in obedience to the will of God who wanted to save sinners.

The owner of the vineyard said that he would destroy the wicked vinedressers and give the vineyard to others. Judgment comes upon the leaders who used the authority God entrusted to them to reject the Son of God and to mislead the people. The responsibility of serving the kingdom of God and the gospel is entrusted to those who believe in Jesus and bear the fruit of faith. Now, whether Jews or Gentiles, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit become the people of God, preach the gospel of salvation to the whole world, and offer its fruit to God.

When the people said, *"Certainly not!"* Jesus quoted the word: *"The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone."* The builders rejected Jesus by their own judgment as if He were a useless stone, but God raised from the dead the Jesus who had been rejected and killed. The risen Jesus became the chief cornerstone who establishes the salvation of God and the Church and holds up all who believe.

The chief cornerstone is the key stone that sets the standard of the whole building and holds it firmly together. Jesus reconciles to God the people who had become His enemies through sin, and establishes those among the Jews and the Gentiles who believe the gospel as one people of God. The only firm foundation of salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

To the person who believes, Jesus is the cornerstone of salvation; but to the person who rejects Him, He becomes the stone of judgment. If a person holds on to his own righteousness and thoughts and rejects Jesus, he stumbles on that stone and is broken, and at the last judgment he cannot escape the judgment

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of Christ. Just as the vinedressers who killed the heir lost the vineyard, the person who rejects Christ cannot enter the kingdom of God and eternal life.

The people who bear the fruit of the kingdom will receive it

The leaders of the church and the workers of the gospel must not treat the Church of God and the saints as their own possession. They must feed the souls the Lord has entrusted to them with the word, preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit exactly, and lead them to bear the fruit of faith that pleases God. The person who knows that he is a steward seeks not his own honor and gain but the will of the owner, and serves the church and souls.

The saints also must not judge and discard the word God has sent according to their own thoughts. Jesus looked like a stone the world had thrown away, but He was the chief cornerstone of salvation that God established. A person must not make his religious career and his own goodness his foundation, but must build the house of faith on the gospel Jesus completed with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Luke chapter 20 verses 9–18 show that judgment comes upon those who reject the Son of God, and that the rejected Jesus became the chief cornerstone of salvation. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed by the baptism of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection, stands firmly on that cornerstone and serves the gospel and the souls God has entrusted to him, offering the fruit of faith.

The things of Caesar and the things of God

"And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people—for they knew He had spoken this parable against them. So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. Then they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, 'Why do you test Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?' They answered and said, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent" (Luke 20:19–26).

"Who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words"

The scribes and the chief priests knew that the parable of the vinedressers had been spoken against them. Just as the wicked vinedressers beat the servants the owner sent and even killed his beloved son, they had rejected the prophets God sent and were now trying to kill Jesus, the Son of God. Rather than hearing the word and repenting, they tried to seize immediately the Jesus who had exposed their sin.

But they could not arrest Jesus right away, because they feared the people. If they had feared God, they would have

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acknowledged their wrong before the word and turned back. Instead, calculating the reactions of the people, they looked for a pretext to hand Jesus over to the rule and authority of the governor, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous to find something politically accusable in the words of the Lord.

The spies complimented Jesus, saying that He spoke and taught rightly, did not show personal favoritism, and taught the way of God in truth. What they said was correct, but there was no faith in their hearts. While speaking words that acknowledged the truth, they were trying to trap the very Jesus who taught that truth. Faith does not stop at saying right words with the lips; it believes and follows that word with the heart.

They asked, *"Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"* Israel was then under the rule of Rome, and the tax paid to Caesar was a sensitive issue. If He said to pay the tax, He could incur the resentment of the people who hated Roman rule; and if He said not to pay it, they could accuse Him of inciting rebellion against the authority of Rome. It was a question framed so that they could attack Jesus whichever way He answered.

But Jesus knew all their craftiness. Man can see only the words and actions that appear outwardly, but Jesus, who is God, knows even the heart and the hidden purposes of man. No religious appearance of pretended righteousness and no beautiful words can hide a wicked intent before the Lord.

"Whose image and inscription does it have?"

Jesus told them to show Him a denarius and asked whose image and inscription were engraved on it. They answered that they were Caesar's. The money they used bore the image and inscription of Caesar and circulated under the rule of Rome.

Through that coin Jesus taught together the responsibility toward worldly authority and the duty toward God.

The word *"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's"* means that a person living in the world must carry out his just responsibilities toward the state and society. Paying taxes honestly, respecting public order, and protecting the lives and property of neighbors are not separated from the faith of the saints. The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not avoid the responsibilities of the world under the pretext of faith, but must live honestly in the places entrusted to them.

But Caesar is not God. The authority of the world must work for order and the public good within the bounds God has allowed. The saints respect the authority of the world, but they do not exalt it above God. When the commands of men go against the word of God and the gospel, the saints put their faith in and obedience to God first.

Jesus then said, *"To God the things that are God's."* If the image and inscription of Caesar were engraved on the denarius, the image of God is engraved on man. Since man was made in the image of God, his whole body, heart, and life belong to God. A person must not think that he has fulfilled all his responsibility by paying taxes, but must give his heart, his faith, and his life to God who made him.

"To God the things that are God's"

Man was made in the image of God, but through sin he became far from God and came to live following his own desires and thoughts. To restore such sinners as the people of God, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and

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took upon His own body all the sins of the world. And bearing those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross, was judged, and died, and He rose again on the third day and completed salvation.

The person who believes in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. Giving oneself to God is not buying salvation with offerings, service, and sacrifice. It is first believing in the remission of sin Jesus gave freely, and then, in gratitude for salvation, using one's time, material things, gifts, and life for the gospel and for souls.

The life that renders to God the things that are God's is not a life that seeks God only during worship hours. The saints carry out their responsibilities honestly at home and at work, serve the word and the gospel in the church, and show love to their neighbors. They do not avoid the responsibilities of the world in the name of faith, nor do they let the affairs and riches of the world rob them of the heart and faith that must be given to God.

The spies came to catch Jesus in His words, but they could not seize on anything before the people. They marveled at the Lord's answer and kept silent. The word of Jesus gave no pretext for rebellion against Caesar, nor did it make people serve worldly power as God. The Lord made exactly clear both the responsibility to be carried out in the world and the faith and obedience of one's whole being that must be given to God.

Luke chapter 20 verses 19–26 show the wisdom and authority of Jesus, who knows the hypocrisy and craftiness of man. What bears the image of Caesar must be returned to Caesar, and the person who was made in the image of God and has been saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit must give himself to God. The saints who have received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit carry out honestly the responsibilities

entrusted to them in the world, while confessing that the owner of their hearts, their faith, and their lives is God alone.

The God of the living and the hope of the resurrection

"Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: 'Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.' Jesus answered and said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.' Then some of the scribes answered and said, 'Teacher, You have spoken well.' But after that they dared not question Him anymore" (Luke 20:27–40).

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"Nor can they die anymore"

After Jesus overcame the snare of the spies over the tax paid to Caesar, this time the Sadducees, who claimed that there is no resurrection, came to Him. On the basis of the levirate marriage recorded in the law of Moses, they asked whose wife a woman would be in the resurrection if seven brothers had married her in turn. This was not a question meant to learn the truth of the resurrection; it was a question meant to make the resurrection a contradiction by presenting a case that looked complicated in this life.

Levirate marriage was an institution for continuing the family and the inheritance of a brother who had died without children. The Sadducees applied the marriage institution of this world, where death exists, unchanged to the world of the resurrection, and then tried to deny the resurrection with the problems that arose within it. But their thinking did not contain the power of God who raises the dead or the newness of the world of the resurrection.

Jesus distinguished between *"The sons of this age"* and *"those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead."* The resurrection is not an endless repetition of life before death under the same conditions. It is the new world of life in which God raises the dead body again and changes it into a body that does not decay and does not die again.

In this world people marry and bear children and continue the generations because people die. But the children of God who participate in the resurrection do not die again, so they do not need to marry and be given in marriage to continue descendants. They enjoy perfect life and joy in God and live forever. The words *"equal to the angels"* mean that the resurrected saints become equal to the angels in the life that does not die again.

The words *"sons of God, being sons of the resurrection"* show that the resurrection is a sure inheritance given to the children of God. A person born under sin cannot become worthy of this resurrection by his own merits or religious efforts. God remits all the sins of the person who believes in the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished, makes him a righteous person and a child of God, and lets him participate in eternal life and the resurrection.

"He is not the God of the dead but of the living"

Jesus proved the resurrection with the writings of Moses, which the Sadducees regarded as authoritative. God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and called Himself the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died in the flesh long before the time of Moses, but God still said that He was their God. The relationship of life bound with God is not cut off by the death of the body, and God will surely raise His people again.

Therefore God is not the God of the dead but the God of the living. To human eyes the death of the body looks like the end of everything, but before God, the source of life, death cannot be the final power. As the word says that *"all live to Him,"* all people are under the authority of God's life and judgment. God raises all the dead: the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit comes out to the resurrection of life, and the person who has rejected the salvation of God comes out to the resurrection of judgment.

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The resurrection of Jesus is our resurrection

This promise of the resurrection was surely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and bearing those sins He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, died, and received the judgment of sin. And on the third day after He was buried, He rose from the dead. The baptism of Jesus is the event in which our sins passed on to Him; the death of the Cross is the judgment our sins received; and the resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee that we who belong to Him will also surely rise again.

Christ became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. If there were no resurrection of the dead, Christ also could not have risen; our preaching of the gospel and our faith would be empty, and we would still be in our sins. But Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with His baptism, received all the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and actually rose again. Therefore, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and belongs to Christ receives the remission of all his sins and obtains eternal life and the resurrection of the body. If the death of Jesus was the death for our sins, the resurrection of Jesus is also our resurrection.

The hope of the resurrection is connected with the second coming of the Lord. When the Lord comes again, the righteous who have fallen asleep in Christ will rise first, and the saints who are alive will also be changed into imperishable bodies and meet the Lord. The righteous who participate in the first resurrection will reign with Christ for a thousand years and serve the Lord, and after that the wicked will also rise to stand before the righteous judgment of God. Because this promise stands, the saints do not despair even when the world grows dark and they

suffer for the gospel, but hope for the resurrection, the reward, and the eternal kingdom of God.

The fundamental error of the Sadducees was that while speaking of the Scriptures, they did not believe the life and the power of God who fulfills that word. Today as well, if we regard Jesus merely as an excellent teacher, or speak only of the Cross while leaving His baptism and resurrection out of the center of faith, we cannot believe the complete gospel. True faith is receiving in the heart the fact that Jesus is God; that He took upon Himself our sins with His baptism and was judged with the blood and death of the Cross; and that with His resurrection He saved us completely from sin and death.

The saints do not grieve without hope when they look at the death of those they love and the weakening of their own bodies. The bodily death of a saint who has died in Christ is a sleep until the time of the resurrection. The God of the living does not forget His children; He will raise them with perfect bodies and clothe them with a life that never becomes sick, grows old, or dies again.

In verses 39 and 40, some of the scribes acknowledged that the word of Jesus was right, and the people no longer dared to question Him. Human sophistry cannot overthrow the word of God. Jesus made clear through the writings of Moses that the resurrection is the settled will of God, and afterward He proved that word in person by His own resurrection.

Luke chapter 20 verses 27–40 proclaim that death is not the end of life and that God will surely raise His people again. The person who has received the remission of all his sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a child of God and a child of the resurrection. The saints believe in Jesus, who completed salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and wait for the second coming of the Lord, the first resurrection, the Millennial Kingdom, and the eternal

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kingdom of God as their sure hope.

Christ, the Son of David and the Lord of David

"And He said to them, 'How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Therefore David calls Him "Lord"; how is He then his Son?'" (Luke 20:41–44).

"David calls Him 'Lord'"

The religious leaders kept asking about authority, taxes, and the resurrection in order to ensnare Jesus. After Jesus answered all their questions with the word of God, this time He asked them who the Christ is. This was not a question checking a piece of Bible knowledge; it was a question showing that to be saved one must rightly know and believe who the Christ is.

People knew that the Christ God promised would come as the Son of David. God promised to raise up an eternal King from the descendants of David, and according to that promise Jesus was born in the flesh of man through the lineage of David. Jesus is true man who came as the Son of David and the eternal King God promised.

But Christ is One who cannot be fully known by the explanation that He is a descendant of David. Jesus presented the word in the Psalms where David called Christ *"my Lord."* David was the king of Israel, yet he exalted the Christ who would come as his own descendant as his Lord. For Christ is God who existed before He was born as the Son of David, the King of

kings whom David himself also had to worship.

The words *"The LORD said to my Lord"* are the scene in which God the Father says to Christ, *"Sit at My right hand."* The right hand of God reveals the glory and the authority Christ enjoys together with the Father. Jesus humbled Himself by taking on the body of a man, but in His essence He is the Creator God and the Lord who rules all things and all people.

The fact that Jesus came as true God and true man is very important in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He came in the flesh of man in order to take upon Himself the sins of man and to die in his place; and because He is the sinless Son of God, He could take upon Himself all the sins of the world, rise from the dead, and accomplish perfect salvation. Only Jesus, the Son of David and the Lord of David, is the perfect Savior who delivers all mankind from sin and judgment.

"Sit at My right hand"

At the time of this text, Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. He would now bear those sins to the Cross, shed His blood and die to receive our death and judgment in our place, rise again on the third day after being buried, and conquer the power of sin, death, and the Devil. After that He would ascend into heaven and sit down at the right hand of the throne of God, fulfilling the word of the Psalms. Today we believe in Jesus who has completed all these things, and the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life.

The words *"Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"*

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proclaim the complete victory of Jesus Christ. Christ conquered sin and death with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and at the last He will subdue every power that opposes Him. Now, as the Savior, He gives sinners the opportunity to believe the gospel; but at the last He will come as the King of kings and the Judge, judge all evil, and complete the kingdom of God.

The faith that believes in Jesus as Lord

The religious leaders knew the titles of the Messiah recorded in the Scriptures, but they did not recognize the Son of God who had come before their eyes. They did not worship the Lord who had come to save them; instead they tried to seize and kill Him. It was because they knew Christ only as a human king continuing the lineage of David and did not believe in Him as God the Savior.

Jesus is not one of the great men or moral teachers; He is the Creator God who made us. To confess Jesus as *"Lord"* is to believe in one's heart that He is the Savior who took upon Himself our sins with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and saved us with His resurrection, and the King who will judge all people on the last day. The person who has this faith does not rely on his own thoughts and merits, but believes the righteousness the Lord completed and receives the remission of all his sins and eternal life.

Luke chapter 20 verses 41–44 proclaim that Christ is true man who came through the lineage of David and at the same time God whom David called Lord. Jesus, who is God, came as a man, completed salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and sat down at the right hand of God. The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit serve Jesus

as their true Lord and Savior, and wait for Him who will subdue all His enemies and complete the eternal kingdom.

The judgment of the hypocrisy that devours the weak

"Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, 'Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.'" (Luke 20:45–47).

"Beware of the scribes"

After revealing through His question that the Christ is a man who came as the Son of David and at the same time God who is the Lord of David, Jesus told His disciples, in the hearing of all the people, to beware of the scribes. The scribes were the people who recorded, interpreted, and taught the word of God to the people, so their words and conduct greatly influenced the faith of many. The office entrusted with the word carried the heavy responsibility of leading souls rightly.

But they displayed their religious position and authority with long robes, and loved the greetings of the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts. They regarded how holy and honored they appeared to people as more important than what kind of person they were before God. They made the office that should have served the people into a tool for exalting their own names and positions, and they covered the

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pride and love of honor in their hearts with a religious appearance.

"Who devour widows' houses"

Their hypocrisy did not stop at coveting honor. Jesus said that they devoured widows' houses. In those days a widow was a weak person who had to be protected economically and socially. The scribes, who knew the word of God well and should have cared for widows, instead used their religious authority and the people's trust to seize the property of widows and fill their own greed. Because those who should have served the weak in the name of God used the name of God to devour the weak, their sin was all the more evil.

While living in such greed, they made long prayers in pretense. Prayer is humbling one's heart before God and asking for grace, but their long prayers were a religious performance to appear godly to people. With their lips they called on God, while in their actual lives they devoured the property of the weak. God looks not at how long and splendid a prayer is, but at the faith of the heart and the actual life behind it.

"These will receive greater condemnation"

Jesus said that they *"will receive greater condemnation"* because they disobeyed the word and deceived people from the very position of knowing and teaching the word of God. Greater responsibility follows those who know much and have great influence. God's more severe judgment comes upon the religious leader who uses the name of God to pile up his own

honor and wealth, exploits the weak, and blocks the way for souls to hear the gospel.

The appearance of the scribes shows that religious deeds and offices cannot wash away a person's sins. Long robes, high seats, and long prayers could not remove the pride and greed within their hearts. The sins of man do not disappear by decorating the outside neatly or piling up religious achievements. A sinner must believe in the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ accomplished in order to receive the remission of all his sins.

Unlike the scribes, who exalted themselves by devouring what belonged to the weak, Jesus gave Himself up to bring sinners to life. He had already taken upon Himself all our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River; He bore those sins to the Cross, shed His blood, died under the judgment of sin, and rose from the dead to conquer sin and death. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, becoming a child of God.

The person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit serves souls rather than being exalted by people. He does not use the offices of the church, his knowledge of the Scriptures, and his life of prayer as means to display his superiority, but uses them to preach the gospel and to care for weak saints and neighbors in need. The Holy Spirit leads the saved saints to serve the church and souls with the heart of Jesus, not seeking their own glory.

Those who teach the word and lead the church especially must engrave this warning on their hearts. Ministry, mission, and service are not a way to be served by people and gather wealth; they are the work of feeding the souls entrusted by Jesus with the gospel of life and protecting them. Using the name of God

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and the gospel to subordinate people to oneself or to covet the property of weak saints is following the sin of the scribes, and God judges such exploitation all the more severely.

The saints also must examine before the word their desire for people's recognition and for high places. The person who has humbled himself before the gospel of the water and the Spirit abandons godliness that is for show, and serves God sincerely in gratitude for the grace of salvation he has already received. God delights not in outward fame and position but in the faith that believes the righteousness Jesus accomplished and loves the gospel and souls.

Luke chapter 20 verses 45–47 warn that religious hypocrisy, which hides pride and greed behind a godly appearance, receives the heavier judgment of God. Unlike the scribes, who exalted themselves by devouring the property of the weak, Jesus gave Himself up with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection to bring sinners to life. The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not chase the praise of men and high places, but exalt the Lord who saved them and serve with love the souls entrusted to them and their weak neighbors. ✉

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 20

[Question] 1. What main events and teachings unfold in Luke chapter 20?

Luke chapter 20 unfolds around the authority of Jesus, who teaches in the temple in Jerusalem, and the disputes of the religious leaders who oppose Him. First, when the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders made an issue of the authority of Jesus, He asked them in return whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. They did not follow the truth but calculated the reactions of the people and evaded the answer.

Second, with the parable of the wicked vinedressers, Jesus exposed the sin and the judgment of the leaders who had rejected the servants God sent and His beloved Son. Jesus, whom men rejected, became the chief cornerstone that God established; He becomes the foundation of salvation to those who believe, but the stone of judgment to those who reject Him.

"Then He looked at them and said, 'What then is this that is written: "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone"? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.'" (Luke 20:17–18).

Third, concerning the question of paying taxes to Caesar, Jesus said to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. Fourth, He taught the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, that those who are raised do not die again, neither marry nor are given in marriage, and become

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children of God as children of the resurrection.

Fifth, quoting the psalm of David, He made clear that Christ is the Son of David and at the same time the One whom David called *"Lord."* Sixth, He warned against the hypocrisy of the scribes, who love the praise of people and the high seats while devouring the property of widows.

All these words show that Jesus is the Savior, the King, and the Judge who teaches with the authority received from God. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. We must submit to His authority from the heart, believe this salvation, and live sincerely in the hope of the resurrection.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 20 verses 1–2, what did the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders ask Jesus, who was teaching in the temple?

The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders asked Jesus by what authority He was teaching the people in the temple, preaching the gospel, and doing these things, and who had given Him that authority.

"Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him and spoke to Him, saying, 'Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?'" (Luke 20:1–2).

These were the leaders who held authority over the temple and the law. When Jesus taught in the temple without their

permission and set right the corrupted order of the temple, they questioned the basis of His authority in order to catch Him. In the previous chapter as well, they had plotted to kill Jesus, but because the people listened attentively to His word, they could not find a way to carry it out.

But the authority of Jesus did not come from men or from any religious organization. Jesus is God who made heaven and earth and mankind, and the Savior who came to save sinners. With the authority God established, He taught the word, remitted sin, and ruled the temple.

Before asking about the authority of Jesus, they should have examined whether they had the heart to receive the word of God. True faith is not judging Jesus by one's own standards, but acknowledging that He is God and the Savior and humbling one's heart under His word.

[Question] 3. In Luke 20:3-4, when the chief priests, scribes, and elders asked about Jesus' authority, what question did Jesus answer?

Jesus did not answer the question of the Sanhedrin leaders directly, but asked them in return whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men.

"But He answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?'" (Luke 20:3–4).

John the Baptist was sent by God to prepare the way of Jesus and to testify to Him. Therefore, if they acknowledged that the baptism of John came from heaven, they also had to accept John's testimony and the baptism he gave to Jesus. On the other hand, if they denied it, they could not avoid the backlash of the

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people who believed John was a prophet.

The leaders calculated not what was true but what consequences would come back to them. If they said it was from heaven, their sin of not believing John would be exposed; and if they said it was from men, they feared being stoned by the people; so they answered that they did not know. Jesus did not explain His authority to those who knew the truth and yet rejected it.

The counter-question of Jesus reveals that both His authority and the ministry of John came from God. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. We must not evade the answer while being concerned about people's reactions, but believe from the heart the salvation God has accomplished.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 20 verse 9, what did Jesus want to teach when He spoke the parable of the wicked vinedressers to the people?

Through the parable of the wicked vinedressers, Jesus wanted to expose the sin of the religious leaders who had rejected the servants God sent and His beloved Son, and to warn of the judgment that would come upon them.

"Then He began to tell the people this parable: 'A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another servant; and they

beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out. 'Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him." But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.' And when they heard it they said, 'Certainly not!'" (Luke 20:9–16).

In the parable, the owner of the vineyard refers to God, the servants sent to the vinedressers to the prophets, and the beloved son to Jesus. The owner entrusted the vineyard to the vinedressers and was in a far country for a long time. When the time came, he sent his servants to receive some of the fruit, but the vinedressers beat them, treated them shamefully, and sent them away empty-handed.

When the owner finally sent his beloved son, the vinedressers tried to kill the heir and seize the inheritance. This shows the sin of the leaders who had rejected the word of God and the prophets and finally tried to kill even Jesus, the Son of God. Though they knew the parable pointed to them, they did not repent but tried to seize Jesus.

Jesus said that the owner of the vineyard would destroy the wicked vinedressers and give the vineyard to others. This is a solemn warning that God takes the entrusted responsibility away from the leaders who treat what is God's as their own possession and do not offer its fruit to Him, and entrusts it to people who bear the fruit of the kingdom of God. The person entrusted with the work of God must serve the word and the gospel faithfully according to the will of the owner.

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[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 20 verses 10–12, what lesson does the conduct of the vinedressers, who beat and drove out the servants the owner sent, give us?

The conduct of the vinedressers, who beat and insulted the servants the owner of the vineyard sent and drove them out empty-handed, teaches us that rejecting the word and the servants God sends is in the end the sin of rebelling against God.

"Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out" (Luke 20:10–12).

The owner did not send a servant only once, but sent other servants again. Yet the vinedressers repeated their violence and grew more hardened. This shows the history in which God urged repentance again and again through the prophets, but the people and their leaders did not listen to the word and persecuted the prophets.

The longsuffering of God is the grace He gives so that people may hear the word and turn back. But if a person repeatedly rejects the word, his heart becomes more hardened, and he finally comes to reject even the Son of God. In how one treats the servant, one's heart toward the master who sent him is revealed.

We also must not take lightly the word of God that someone preaches just because of the appearance or background of the person who preaches it. We must discern the truth in the light of the written word, and when our wrong is exposed, we must

humble our hearts and turn back. The person entrusted with the gospel also must not put forward his own authority, but must serve as a faithful servant who seeks the fruit of his master.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 20 verse 13, what can we learn from the words of the owner of the vineyard, *"What shall I do? I will send my beloved son"*?

The words of the owner of the vineyard that he would send his beloved son show that God, after bearing long with sinners and sending the prophets again and again, finally sent His only begotten Son, Jesus. Jesus is not one of many servants but the beloved Son of God and the rightful heir of the vineyard.

"Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him." (Luke 20:13).

The owner said that the vinedressers would respect his son. This reveals the love and compassion of God who sent His Son, and at the same time it exposes how great the sin of the vinedressers was, who rejected even that son. The vinedressers did not kill the son because they did not know who he was; they killed him because they knew he was the heir and wanted to seize the inheritance.

This parable also shows that the death of Jesus was not an accidental failure. The religious leaders rejected Jesus, but God established the rejected One as the chief cornerstone. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and saved sinners by rising from the dead.

Therefore, we must not see Jesus merely as one of the

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prophets or as an excellent teacher. We must believe in Him as the beloved Son whom God sent and as our Savior. To respect the Son is to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit He fulfilled and to obey that word.

[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 20 verse 17, what does the word Jesus quoted, *"The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"* mean?

The word *"The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone"* means that God raised Jesus, who had been rejected and killed by the religious leaders, from the dead and established Him as the most important foundation of salvation.

"Then He looked at them and said, 'What then is this that is written: "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone"?" (Luke 20:17).

A builder is a person who selects the stones to be used in a building. The leaders of that day threw Jesus away like a stone unnecessary for the kingdom of God, but their judgment could not change the will of God. God made Jesus, whom men rejected, the cornerstone that joins sinners to God and builds the house of God firmly.

The apostles also testified to the death and the resurrection of Jesus with this word.

"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' 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 4:11–12).

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the

sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The person who believes this salvation builds the house of faith on Jesus the cornerstone and becomes one of the people of God. The foundation of salvation and of the church is not human wisdom or merit, but only Jesus and the salvation He accomplished.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 20 verse 18, how is the chief cornerstone described?

Luke chapter 20 verse 18 describes Jesus, the chief cornerstone, as the stone that divides salvation and judgment. To the person who believes in Jesus He becomes the firm foundation of salvation, but to the person who rejects Jesus and His word He becomes the stone that makes him stumble and finally judges him completely.

"Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder" (Luke 20:18).

Jesus was appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives Jesus as his Savior obtains the remission of sin and eternal life, but the person who puts forward his own thoughts and righteousness and rejects Him stumbles over the word.

The word that the stone will fall on a person and grind him to powder shows that Jesus is the Lord of judgment. The person who has rejected His authority cannot withstand the judgment of God with his position or merits. Jesus is the God of love who grants salvation, and at the same time the Judge who judges the sin of unbelief and opposition.

Therefore, we must not regard Jesus as a stone to be thrown

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away according to the world's evaluation, but must believe in Him as the precious cornerstone that God has established. The person who believes the salvation Jesus accomplished and stands on Him obtains eternal life, but the person who rejects Him to the end is defeated before that stone.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 20 verses 34–36, how did Jesus explain the resurrection and the state of those who are resurrected?

Jesus said that the resurrection certainly exists, and that the resurrected children of God live in an order of life different from this world. They neither marry nor are given in marriage and do not die again; in this they are equal to the angels, and as children of the resurrection they become children of God.

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:34–36).

The Sadducees asked whose wife a woman would be in the resurrection if she had married seven brothers in turn. They thought that even after the resurrection the present world's way of marriage and of continuing life would go on as it is. Jesus taught that those who are raised do not die again, so they do not need to continue life through marriage.

Being equal to the angels does not mean that resurrected people turn into angels; it means that they are the same in that they do not die again and live beyond the marriage order of this world. The resurrection is not something in which only the soul

remains; it is the event in which God raises the dead body again. The body that decays and is weak rises as an imperishable and glorious body.

The sure ground of the resurrection is the fact that Jesus first rose from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep, and it guarantees that the saints who belong to Him will rise again. The baptism Jesus received from John was the baptism through which He took our sin upon Himself, and the punishment of the Cross was the punishment in place of our sin, and the resurrection of Jesus reveals the life of the resurrection that will be given to those who believe.

Therefore, the saints do not regard death as the end. Even when this world is dark and the body grows weak, they believe that God will raise them again and give them eternal life. Holding this hope of the resurrection, we must believe and preach the gospel in the life entrusted to us today and serve the Lord.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 20 verses 42–43, what did David say about the Messiah in the psalm Jesus quoted?

David recorded in the psalm that God told the Messiah to sit at His right hand until He makes all His enemies His footstool. And David called the Messiah, who would come as his own descendant, *"My Lord."*

"Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."'" (Luke 20:42–43).

The word Jesus quoted is Psalm 110 verse 1.

"The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I

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make Your enemies Your footstool.'" (Psalm 110:1).

The Messiah came in the flesh from the lineage of David according to the promise, but He is not merely "the descendant of David." He is the Son of God who existed before David and whom David called Lord.

The word about sitting at the right hand of God shows that Jesus is the King who possesses honor and ruling authority. Jesus accomplished the work of saving sinners, rose from the dead, was exalted, and is alive now, ruling. The word that His enemies become His footstool means that sin, death, Satan, and every power that opposes Christ will finally submit before Jesus.

"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:12–14).

The kingship of Jesus, who sat down at the right hand of God, is connected with the atonement He completed. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Therefore, we must not see Jesus only as a historical figure or a teacher, but must believe in Him as the Lord of David and as the King and Savior who rules over us. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Those who have received the authority to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world

< Luke 20:1-8 >

"Now it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, that the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted Him and spoke to Him, saying, 'Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?' But He answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven," He will say, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "From men," all the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet.' So they answered that they did not know where it was from. And Jesus said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.'"

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"The baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?"

The word authority refers to power. It means the actual power to exercise dominion and influence over another being, or the potential for such power. The word might means the same, and the word right means being granted the qualification to do as one wills. When Jesus came to this earth and was teaching the people and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, came near and asked Him: tell us by what authority You are doing these things, and who gave You this authority.

Then Jesus asked them in return: the baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? That is, He asked back whether what John did was something God had commanded or not. They were put in a difficult position, reasoned among themselves, and finally replied that they *"did not know where it was from,"* and Jesus also said that neither would He tell them by what authority He was doing these things.

Why did Jesus ask them in return about the baptism of John, of all things? Because the ground of Jesus' authority and of the gospel He preached lies in the baptism Jesus received from John. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God appointed. To save us, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took upon Himself our sins; bearing those sins, He was nailed to the Cross and died, and He rose again, completing the work of giving salvation to those who believe what He accomplished. Therefore, the question whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men is the very question of who Jesus is and where His gospel came from.

The crowds that followed Jesus and those who envied Him

What Jesus did when He came to this earth was the work of saving us from sin, and the work of teaching heaven and countless truths with the word. Some who heard that word believed, and some did not. Go back to that time and think about it. Seen with the eyes of the world, Jesus was not a man who had studied at a famous school, nor a politician, nor a man with what the world calls power. Yet He gathered people, taught them, and led them; At least tens of thousands followed Him around, and far more people than that followed Jesus. It was so throughout the whole nation of Israel.

Who, then, would become king in Israel? Jesus, who was the most popular, was in a position to become king. In the eyes of the politicians and the religious leaders, there was no answer as to what to do with this man. So they asked, as in today's text: by what authority do you do these things? From whom did You receive this authority, this might, this right? Did You study under Gamaliel? Do You have even a document of authority handed down from the religious leaders? Are You a man with connections in Rome? Since a man with no background gathered crowds, taught them, and at times performed miracles and signs, they felt that their own position kept sinking lower.

Where does the authority to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world come from?

This word is truly important for us as well. The work we are doing—preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the

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whole world, preaching the word of God and distributing mission literature and eBooks overseas—by whose recognition of right and authority are we doing it? Is it the world, or is it God? The Lord said that we would be His witnesses in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth—that is, He said it would be so when the Holy Spirit comes upon us.

Therefore, those who believe the work Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth to save us, and who have received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit as a gift, have the authority to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. We are doing that work right now. People find it strange. How can those people preach the word of God that we have never heard before, and how can they publish such books? And yet, amazingly, when people read those books they receive the remission of sin—it is astonishing, they say. That is how it looks to people. But we are doing this work having received the authority from God. If we had not received the authority from God, we could not do this work.

True authority belongs to God alone

True authority and might belong to God alone. That God is the One who made the universe and created us, and the One who, when we had fallen into sin, came to this earth and worked to save us. The authority and the might to remit our sins belong to Him. When the Lord says, *"Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5)* the sins of the one who believes that word disappear. Because absolute power and absolute right belong to God alone, whatever God wills comes to pass just so.

God has given that authority to us as well. The work of being His witnesses in Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth—

we are doing it. Some people find it truly strange. There are so many famous and highly educated people in the world, and yet people unknown to the world are preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Would there be even one pastor on this globe who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit exactly, they say, and would there be any literature containing it? And in fact there is no one in the world who knows it. Truly, not a single one.

Yet we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit as if we had seen it with our own eyes. And when people read what we have preached and believe it, their sins disappear, so people marvel. And the point where people become confused is exactly this: who gave you such authority? Just as people once asked Jesus from whom He had inherited such authority, they ask us today as well: is it the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Full Gospel—from which denomination did you receive it? But it is none of those denominations. The One who gave us the authority is God.

When we read, realize, and accept what Jesus did as recorded in the Scriptures, God gives us the Holy Spirit and, through that Spirit, has us exercise this authority. That is, we are granted the ability and the authority to serve and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so we carry out this work. Dear fellow believers, no one has authority but God. Even the life, death, and breath of man depend on God. Who can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Only the one who believes can preach it.

Only the one who believes that God has given this to each of us can convey well what the Lord has done. A person without faith in his heart may speak this gospel with his mouth, but he cannot truly preach it, nor can he put it into literature. However much a person studies at university and graduate school and even receives a doctorate, all that knowledge can be written in

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twenty pages of a small notebook. Even if he were told to write out his whole life, it would all fit in there. He has nothing more to bring out. But what we have received from God is inexhaustible. There is so much that people simply cannot take it all in. So we make literature and give it out. People think we give the books away because they could not be sold, but in fact we give them free because they are so precious. Only, people fail to recognize their value.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that gives salvation to those who believe

How could people know that God has caused us to be born again of water and the Spirit? When asked what the water in the Scriptures is, people give answers that make no sense. Some say it is the amniotic fluid that surrounds a baby in the womb; some say it is the word of God; they say all kinds of absurd things. That is because they have never met the real water. Because they have not met the water Jesus Christ gave—the water by which God took upon Himself our sins and washed them away—they say absurd things. The person who has met that water says clearly that the water is the baptism Jesus received. This truth is so astonishing that people do not know it.

People in the old days also said of Jesus: what could there be in that man of ordinary appearance? Can anything come out of Nazareth? What could there be in a man from that backwater with no education, no background, no political power? But Jesus was in His essence God. To save us mankind, He put on human flesh for thirty-three years and lived for a time on this earth. To save us, He received baptism from John the Baptist and took over our sins, was nailed to the Cross and died, rose again from

the dead, and completed the work of giving salvation to those who believe what He has done.

It is the same with you. When you look at the person who preaches the word of God, he does not look learned; he looks like the man next door; his body is not sound, so even his pronunciation is not clear and he looks worn. How is it, then, that people receive the remission of sin by reading the books that such a man has written? Even people who have believed in Jesus for decades read one of those books and receive the remission of sin, and testimonies of salvation come in not from one or two countries but from many countries. Among them are theologians, pastors, missionaries, and lay believers; and people who had grown disappointed while believing in Jesus and were resting also confess that through one of our books they have truly met the Lord.

We must know the authority of Jesus

How much we can accept what Jesus has done is determined by how much we know His authority. Yet some people carelessly call out the name Jesus, mocking and speaking as if to an inferior. But if one knows who Jesus is, one can never call Him that way and must always use reverent address. True faith knows who He is and honors Him accordingly. Those who speak the name of Jesus carelessly regard Him as no more than the name of some worldly cult leader they can use as they please. But Jesus is the Creator and the Savior. Those who speak so carelessly do not even know how much they are despising Jesus.

Jesus is the Absolute One, and He is God. He holds the right to plan and to act according to His own will. For He is the Creator. Even before He made us mankind, He knew that man

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would fall, and He prepared salvation in advance. He created the universe, made man, and when man sinned, He promised, I will come to save you; He said He would come to this earth borrowing the body of a woman; and when the time came, He came according to that promise and took upon Himself our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And bearing those sins, He went to the Cross, received all the judgment for the sin of the world, said that it was finished, and died. He died and rose again, completing the work of making us mankind new, causing us to be born again, and making us the people of God. He could do so because He is God. Man can never do this. Only because Jesus is God did He do it.

Now as well, people gain or lose faith depending on knowing who Jesus is. Many people all over the world believe in Jesus, but if they do not rightly know who Jesus is, they end up rejecting Him even while saying they believe in Him. The Jehovah's Witnesses say Jesus is merely a man; some new theologians say He is the Son of God but only a human being, and that there is salvation apart from Jesus. Faith starts from rightly knowing who Jesus is, and if one does not rightly know this, then even if one has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it comes to nothing. Jesus is the Absolute One and God, the Savior and the Judge.

Therefore, Jesus came to this earth having received that authority from God the Father. He came to save us and He saved us. When we rightly acknowledge and rightly believe in that Jesus, what Jesus accomplished is applied to you and me just as it is. The work by which Jesus came to this earth, took upon Himself our sins, and received all the judgment for sin is applied to the one who believes that He is God and the Savior. God has saved you—how could you not receive salvation? Yet there are people who believe and still do not receive salvation, because it

is not applied to them. It is because they regard Jesus as merely one of the creatures and Christianity as merely one religion among many.

This is a problem that has continued from before the early church. Among those who rightly know who Jesus is, acknowledging Him as God and as the Savior, and who acknowledge that He came to this earth, took upon Himself our sins, was judged, died, and rose again to save us, there is no one who has failed to be saved. But the person who cannot rightly acknowledge this is outside salvation even if he preaches in a church and holds an office. From where do you and I receive the authority to become children of God? We receive it from the faith that believes what Jesus has done. For Jesus, though He is God, came to this earth as our Savior and accomplished the work of saving us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since He has done it, how could any sin remain in you and me?

People disputed over this in the old days and they dispute in the same way today. Even the disciples of Jesus were confused because they did not know who He was. As they were crossing by boat, a storm arose and the wind blew, and as water came into the boat, the disciples shook Jesus awake and said that they were perishing. Jesus said, why are you so without faith, and commanded the wind and the sea to be still, and immediately there was a calm. Jesus made this whole universe with a single word. The things in the air and the things on the earth, the things seen and the things unseen—Jesus made them together with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Now as well, that battle hangs on whether we believe God or not. The work by which Jesus came to this earth and removed our sins is a work that could not be accomplished unless He is God. Because He is God and yet came to this earth in the flesh and removed our sins, we have no sin. If He had been one of the creatures, like Siddhartha or

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Socrates or Confucius or Mencius, such a man could never remove the sins of man.

Man is a brood of evildoers

A religion made by man is false because man made it. Some religions say that if you recite a chant you will receive blessing and salvation and everything will prosper; but since the being who made it is human, it is all false. Buddhism, too, was not made by God but made by man. So it teaches that man himself is god—that you are god. Man calls himself god, meditates and disciplines himself, and repeats words that call what exists nonexistent and what does not exist existent. One famous monk even summed up such teaching in the well-known saying, Mountains are mountains and waters are waters. One need only acknowledge what is seen as it is; instead they call what exists nonexistent and what does not exist existent, and lead people astray.

But God is the One who made the universe, and He knew that Adam and Eve would sin. When they sinned, He came to them, made tunics of skin and clothed them, and prepared a sacrificial offering. Man had sinned and deserved to be judged, but God planned the way to save man by passing his sin on to the sacrifice and sacrificing that offering in his place. The One who planned this work is God, the One who carried it out is God, and the One who gives salvation to those who believe it is God. Therefore, who began it matters greatly. We do not preach ourselves; we preach what Jesus did—that is, what God did. When people accept what God has done, they obtain salvation and receive the remission of sin. This truth is the same in this present age and within the Church of God.

In the end, people's responses divide into two. God works through people; and the person who believes that that man is a man of God, that God has raised him up and works through him, receives the word of God by receiving what he preaches from the Scriptures. But if one has no faith, saying that he is not a man God has raised up and not a man who has met God, then however much he preaches the word, no work ever takes place. So this is truly important.

Therefore, I have no time at this pulpit to string out long stories about men. Only, when I must speak of human insufficiency while preaching the gospel, I take my own lack as the example, lest I wound your hearts by taking you as examples. I use as illustrations the fact that I myself am a lacking, insufficient, weak human being. But the conclusion is one: just as God has saved even someone like me, He has saved you as well. It is to convey this fact that I take myself as the example.

What kind of being is man originally? Depending on whether one has received the remission of sin, one sees people differently. It is true that all people resemble the image of God, but if you look deep inside, man is a brood of evildoers. He is a being who may commit any evil at any time. When his circumstances are good a person looks good, but when his circumstances turn against him and he falls into hardship, the evil that was inside pours out. Therefore, your appearance in times of peace is not your true self. The self that is revealed when things are truly hard, when your body is at its worst, when you have fallen into the worst circumstances—that is your real self.

Someone comes for counseling and says, "Pastor, I am sorry. I did wrong, but that was not my true heart." But it is not right to say that what was clearly revealed in action was not one's real intent. He was such a person originally, and what was hidden in his heart was merely revealed; yet he hurriedly gathers it up and

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denies it. As the Scriptures also show, man is a being who, when there is nothing to eat, will even devour his own children. It is hard to believe, but such historical events are in the Scriptures and are also many in this world. When a person gains even a little, he soon becomes arrogant and treats the weak with contempt. That is what man is like—not just certain people, but all people.

Though man is such a brood of evildoers, he does not admit it. Before whom must we admit this? Before God. The Gospel of Mark says that what comes out of a man, out of his heart, is evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness (Mark 7:21–22). In the heart of man are the heart that murders, evil thoughts, and every kind of evil that deceives and is lewd. He has simply not yet put them into action, and yet he rationalizes, saying that he is not such a person, and lives on. But God speaks. We are originally such a brood, He says; therefore we must receive the remission of sin, and if not, we go to hell.

Jesus says so. Who is Jesus, that He says so? He is the Creator who made us, and God; He knows everything, and therefore He says it. We must acknowledge it before the word of that God. We must acknowledge that we are such beings, people who cannot help sinning all our lives and going to hell, and we must accept what Jesus did when He came to this earth to save us. We must acknowledge that Jesus suffered, was bruised, and was beaten on this earth because of our sins and iniquities, and because He had taken over our sins and iniquities by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. We must accept in this way what God has done, and so obtain salvation.

Submit to the authority of Jesus, who is God, and receive salvation

To whom does authority belong? It belongs to God. Who is that God? God revealed Himself as Jesus, that is, in human flesh. He is not One our eyes can see by nature, and He is not on the same level as creatures like us. He is the Absolute One, the One who plans all things and carries them out as He wills. He is the One who made promises to man and did just as He promised. Because Jesus is God, we must believe all that Jesus said and all that Jesus did to save us. When we do, we receive salvation.

We must submit under that authority. We must submit to Jesus who is God, to the words Jesus spoke, and to the will He has appointed. Unless we submit, we can never receive the grace He bestows. When we submit and obey, breaking our hearts and accepting what He has done, we obtain salvation, become children of God, reach heaven, and become workers of God on this earth. Now I will close the message. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

God who made the rejected Son the chief cornerstone of salvation

< Luke 20:9-19 >

"Then He began to tell the people this parable: 'A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast him out. 'Then the owner of the vineyard said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him." But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others.' And when they heard it they said, 'Certainly not!' Then He looked at them and said, 'What then is this that is written: "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief

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cornerstone"? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.' And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people—for they knew He had spoken this parable against them."

The relationship between the owner who made the vineyard and the vinedressers who worked there was clear from the beginning. The vinedressers were not the people who had made the land or established the vineyard; they were people who had received from the owner a place to work in it. Jesus said, *"A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time" (Luke 20:9)*. Yet when the owner sent his servants to receive some of the fruit, the vinedressers beat the servants and drove them out, and finally they even killed the son, the heir, to make the inheritance their own. They did not merely confuse what was entrusted to them with their own; knowing the owner's rights, they plotted together to seize them.

Our lives, our time, and our bodies are not possessions we have made for ourselves either. God gave us life, makes us breathe, and has even granted us the opportunity to hear the word. The church and the ministry of the gospel are also not a vineyard given us to show off our talents, but a place God has entrusted to us for the work of bringing souls to life. Yet when we hold a charge long and grow used to it, it is easy to put our own judgment before the owner's will. If a person treats the church as his own domain because he has long carried an office, or tries to rule other people's faith by his own will because he knows the word well, then the heart that pushes out the owner's rights, as the vinedressers did, appears in us as well. That God has

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entrusted work to us does not mean that He has handed over the ownership. Rather, we have been entrusted with the responsibility of asking the owner's will and returning to him the fruit he requires.

The vinedressers who turned the owner's longsuffering into their own right

When the time came, the owner sent a servant to receive some of the fruit. The vinedressers beat the first servant severely and sent him away empty-handed; they beat and insulted the second servant as well; and they wounded even the third and cast him out. What the servants demanded was not to take the whole vineyard. It was to return the owner's rightful share. But the vinedressers did not stop at refusing the fruit; they harmed the men who conveyed the owner's word. The heart that rejected the word revealed itself as hostility toward the servants who delivered it.

God sent prophets to the people of Israel again and again. The prophets were not men who came to exalt their own names; they were servants who preached the word so that the people would return to God. They cried out to forsake idols, to remember the covenant of God, not to oppress the poor, and to do justice. The people Jesus directly pointed to as the vinedressers of this parable were the scribes and the chief priests who had been entrusted with the word of God and the care of His people. They received the word not as the standard that judged their lives and their authority, but as a sound that threatened the religious order they had built. The owner's word was uncomfortable for them not because it was hard to understand, but because in the place God had entrusted to them

they were acting as owners. This does not mean that the leaders and office-bearers of the church today who have received the remission of sin are of the same standing as these scribes and chief priests. But since thoughts of protecting one's own authority in the flesh can arise even in the saved, the leaders and office-bearers of the church must receive this word as a warning by which to examine themselves. They must not make the word a tool for guarding their own authority and order; when the word of Scripture exposes a wrong, they must acknowledge that the word of God is right, correct their thoughts and conduct, and lead the believers to God.

The scene of sending three servants in turn shows the owner's longsuffering. When the first servant came back beaten, the owner would have been without fault even if he had taken the vineyard back right away. Yet the owner sent another servant, and then another. God's repeating of the word of salvation is not because He takes sin lightly. It is because He wants the person who has not yet received the remission of sin to turn from his way, believe in the Son God sent and the salvation He accomplished, and obtain life. The fact that one has been able to hear the gospel many times is not proof that one is right; it is proof that God has long granted the opportunity to believe.

Even after beating the first servant the vinedressers did not turn back, and they repeated worse violence against the second and the third. The parable records plainly that they beat the servants severely, insulted them, wounded them, and cast them out. The person who has not yet received the remission of sin must acknowledge that God is right and he himself is wrong, and turn from his own righteousness and his own way. And he must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed by the Son God sent, and receive the remission of all his sins. The word of salvation heard again and again is the opportunity that calls

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him to that faith.

To the person who has received the remission of sin, God sometimes lets the same word be heard again through sermons and the exhortation of the church. This does not mean being saved again; it means that God exposes and corrects the wrong thoughts and conduct of the flesh that remain in the believer. Since the person who exhorts also has flesh, he is not always right; so the believer must neither accept nor reject a word unconditionally merely because it is a man's word, but must discern whether it agrees with the Scriptures. If an exhortation agrees with the Scriptures, he must not stand on his pride but acknowledge that God is right and correct his thoughts and conduct.

God's final appeal in sending His beloved Son

After the three servants had been harmed, the owner said, *"What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect him when they see him" (Luke 20:13)*. The son is not a servant of slightly higher rank among many servants. He is the owner's beloved son and the heir of the vineyard. God's sending of Jesus Christ was not merely sending one more prophet; it was the event in which the Son, who is in His essence God, came among His own people in the body of a man. Through the Son, God revealed His will and His love most clearly.

The vinedressers did not kill the son because they failed to recognize him. They reasoned, *"This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours" (Luke 20:14)*. They tried to remove him precisely because they knew he was the heir. They judged that as long as the son was alive, the vineyard could not become theirs. This is the deep face of sin. Man says that

God exists, yet he hates for his own plans and desires to be judged by the word. In hard times he asks Jesus for help, yet when the word of the Lord breaks his own thinking, he refuses to follow. For if he believes Jesus as the Lord of his whole life, he can no longer decide by his own desires alone what to choose and how to live.

The scribes and the chief priests were the men who taught the law of God. They said they served God in the temple, but when the Son of God came, they tried to seize Him in order to protect their own authority. A godly office and religious activity do not automatically produce a heart that obeys God. Rather, if one makes the word a tool of one's own honor and gain, the more holy work one does, the more one can become a vinedresser who holds the owner's vineyard all the more tightly. When worship, prayer, and service become a place to exalt ourselves, the contradiction arises of piling up our own inheritance in the name of the beloved Son instead of respecting Him.

Before this parable we cannot condemn only the greed of others. We must examine whether we have called God Lord only when He supported our plans, and delayed following when the word broke our greed. We must also look back on whether, while doing the work of the church, we have turned the glory of its results to our own name, or ignored God who entrusted the work and the fellow members who labored together, speaking as if we had achieved it ourselves. Even in us who have received the remission of sin, the desires of the flesh and thoughts of self-exaltation remain. We must not rationalize such thoughts but acknowledge them in the light of the word, and believing that the owner of the vineyard is God, we must correct our thoughts and conduct according to His will.

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The Son who was cast out of the vineyard saved sinners

The vinedressers cast the son out of the vineyard and killed him. This word points to Jesus dying on the Cross outside Jerusalem. The beloved Son of God was rejected by His own people and driven to the place of a sinner. But the death of Jesus was not a defeat that ended with the schemes of wicked men. Even within man's rebellion, God fulfilled the righteousness He had appointed to save sinners. Men rejected the Son, but through that very Son God opened the way to save even the sinners who had rejected Him.

What is the salvation Jesus Christ planned and accomplished for us? Jesus is in His essence God, but to save us He came to this earth in the body of a man. The Lord, who was without any sin, received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. At that time Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)* and with that baptism He was passed all the sins mankind would commit from Adam to the end of the world. When John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus, all the sins of the world passed on to the body of Jesus. Afterward John the Baptist testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. The Lord took upon Himself all those sins that had been passed on to Him and bore them all the way to the Cross.

On the Cross the Lord received the judgment of sin in our place, shed His blood, and actually died. Luke records that Jesus said, *"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" (Luke 23:46)* and then breathed His last. God did not remit the price of our sins with mere words; Jesus actually paid in full, with His own life, the price of all the sins that had been passed on to Him

through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And Jesus did not remain in the tomb. The angel proclaimed, *"He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:6)*. By rising from the dead, the Lord conquered sin and death and completed all the righteousness of God and our salvation. This is the salvation Jesus Christ planned and accomplished in person for us.

This fact is the very gospel of the water and the Spirit. We were sinners who had seized what belongs to the owner and rejected even the Son, so we could neither pay the price of sin with our own deeds nor return to God by ourselves. But God entrusted to His beloved Son the salvation we could not achieve, and Jesus accomplished it all—the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes this word in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. The Scripture testifies, *"By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14)*. The Lord Himself became the one offering and made those who believe perfect forever, so man does not need to add his own deeds to complete salvation again.

God has made us, who have received the remission of all sins by believing this gospel, His own children and has given us the Holy Spirit. Since our flesh has not become perfect, thoughts still arise of wanting to make our own name known, of wanting to possess the work entrusted to us, and of wanting to avoid the word when it touches our pride. At such times we must acknowledge that the word of God is right and correct our thoughts and conduct. The saved person has already left the way of living only for himself and chosen the way of living for the Lord, so he must remember that the owner of the vineyard is God, and must rightly carry out the work of keeping and preaching the gospel together with the church.

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The rejected stone became the chief cornerstone

When the people heard of the destruction of the vinedressers and the transfer of the vineyard and wished it would not be so, Jesus presented the word: *"The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone" (Luke 20:17)*. The builders threw away the stone they judged unfit for the building. The scribes and the chief priests of Jesus' day likewise judged that Jesus did not fit the order they had built. He did not ask for their permission, He exposed their hypocrisy and greed, and He drew near to sinners and gave them the word of salvation. So they tried to throw Jesus outside the city like a useless stone.

But God made that rejected stone the chief cornerstone. The cornerstone decides the direction and the joining of the building. The salvation of God and the church are not built on human wisdom or on the honor of particular church leaders. As the gospel of the water and the Spirit makes clear, Jesus was passed our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again. This Jesus Christ is the only foundation and the center. However great a church's numbers, property, and social influence may be, if it departs from this gospel it is like a building whose walls do not fit one another. Conversely, however small and unnoticed in the world, if it believes and preaches the word in line with Jesus the cornerstone, it is built up as a church God uses.

The faith of the individual follows the same standard. One cannot lay one's own experience, emotions, and long religious life as the foundation and then add the words of Jesus on top. Whether I am a sinner or a righteous person must also be judged not by the day's deeds and feelings but by the salvation Jesus accomplished. God has declared righteous those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit; so a believing righteous

person, while admitting the lack of his flesh, does not say that sin remains in his heart. When he has done well he does not build up his own righteousness, and when his wrong is exposed he can acknowledge that the word of God is right and correct his thoughts and conduct. The righteousness Jesus completed is the foundation of salvation from beginning to end.

To be aligned with the cornerstone means to take the word of the Lord as the standard within the church as well. The one who goes before must not use his office as a means of guarding his own authority, but must lead the members to stand in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The members must not pick out only the words that suit their taste, but must humbly receive any exhortation that agrees with the Scriptures. The finances, the time, and the materials entrusted to us must not be used for personal honor but honestly for the work of bringing souls to life. We must not make one another's talents grounds for rivalry, but must regard each member as the house of God joined to Jesus the cornerstone. It is fitting for us who are saved to live this way in the church according to the Lord's will.

Will you be broken on the stone, or receive the judgment of the stone?

Jesus said, *"Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder" (Luke 20:18)*. The God who sent His beloved Son is also the righteous Judge. This word is a solemn warning that the person who rejects and opposes Jesus cannot escape His judgment. Therefore, we must not treat Jesus as a religious object to be used for our own purposes, but must acknowledge the sin the Lord has exposed and believe the salvation He accomplished.

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Repentance is not merely repeating the confession that one has vaguely done wrong. It is acknowledging before the word that God is right and I am wrong, and turning from my own thoughts to the word of God. The person who has not yet received the remission of sin must acknowledge that his good deeds, his prayers, and his long church life cannot remove his sin. And he must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus was passed all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, bore those sins, was judged and shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation—and so receive the remission of all his sins.

The scribes and the chief priests knew that this parable pointed to them. The word records their reaction: they *"sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people" (Luke 20:19)*. Realization was not faith. Even knowing that their sin had been exposed, they tried to seize Jesus, and they feared the people more than God. If one understands the word exactly and still does not break one's heart, knowledge cannot save. The pride of knowing the truth can rather become a weapon that opposes the owner.

What will you do now that you know this parable points to the chief priests and the scribes of Jesus' day? If you have not yet received the remission of sin, you must not pass by condemning only them. You must acknowledge that you too are a sinner who has put your own will before the word of God and rejected His Son. Acknowledge that your good deeds, your prayers, and your religious life cannot remove your sin, and believe in Jesus, who was rejected by men but whom God established as the cornerstone of salvation. You must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which the Lord completed with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and receive the remission of all your sins.

We who have already received the remission of sin are not of the same standing as the vinedressers who rejected Jesus; we are people who have become children of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Yet even in us, thoughts can arise in the flesh of building our own kingdom and our own name in the church and in the ministry of the gospel. At such times, let us not rationalize those thoughts, but acknowledge that the owner of the church and of the gospel ministry is God, and correct our thoughts and conduct. Since we have already chosen the way of living for the Lord, let us unite with the church, exalt Jesus the cornerstone, keep exactly the gospel He completed, and preach it to the souls who have not yet heard it. Let us work honestly in the places entrusted to us, receive the exhortation of the word, build up the weak members, and return all the glory to God the owner. Before the will of God, who made the rejected Son the chief cornerstone of salvation, let us not claim ownership for ourselves, but live believing the word of Jesus. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Render to God the things that are God's

< Luke 20:20-26 >

"So they watched Him, and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor. Then they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, 'Why do you test Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?' They answered and said, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent."

The words the spies offered to Jesus sound, on the surface, like an excellent confession of faith. They complimented Him, saying that He spoke and taught rightly, did not show personal favoritism, and truly taught the way of God. Each of those words did not contradict the ministry of Jesus. But they did not speak in order to believe the truth; they approached in order to obtain a word by which to hand Jesus over to the authority of the governor. They spoke right words while hiding a wicked

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purpose. Luke records plainly that they approached having *"pretended to be righteous" (Luke 20:20)*.

They asked whether they should pay taxes to Caesar. If He said to pay, He could incur the resentment of the people suffering under Roman rule; if He said not to pay, there would be grounds to accuse Him of inciting rebellion against Roman power. It was a question calculated so that whichever side He chose, they could seize Jesus. These men were not waiting for an answer in order to know the will of God; they were waiting for a sentence to use for a purpose they had already fixed. The content of the question dealt with public responsibility, but their real interest was neither truth nor responsibility. It was to catch Jesus in His words and protect their own power.

We too can misuse right words in any number of ways. We can question someone not to understand him but to catch his fault, and we can pull in Bible verses to push through our own greed. With our mouths we say we are seeking the will of God, while we have already fixed our own conclusion and are only waiting for the expressions in the word that will take our side. The accuracy of godly words alone does not prove the honesty of the heart. God is not One who hears only what words we spoke; He knows even whom we exalted with those words and what we sought to gain.

The Lord who knows the craftiness hidden behind right compliments

The word makes it clear: *"He perceived their craftiness" (Luke 20:23)*. The spies could disguise themselves as righteous and could look, before the people, like men asking a legitimate question, but they could not deceive the eyes of Jesus. Jesus is

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not One whose heart is moved by compliments so that He grows careless, nor One who stays trapped in the frame of a question and picks one of the options His opponents have prepared. Since He is God who made the heart of man, He knew exactly the craftiness and the hidden purpose behind the words.

This fact is a fearful warning to the hypocrite that even his hidden purposes are laid bare before God, and a great comfort to the person who seeks the Lord honestly. People sometimes misjudge even our hearts when our words are clumsy, and misunderstand us when we cannot explain our circumstances fully. But just as the Lord is not deceived by decorated words, He does not miss a sincere sigh either. Therefore, before God we do not need to package ourselves with splendid expressions. We should confess that we do not know what we do not know; and if greed is mixed in, we should acknowledge that fact and ask, ready to receive the judgment of the word.

The spies said to Jesus, *"You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth" (Luke 20:21)*. They did not believe this truth, but Jesus actually acted so. He did not unconditionally reject the payment of taxes because of the people's favor, nor did He hide the sovereignty of God because of the threat of Roman power. Without changing His answer according to people's appearance and influence, He put the authority of Caesar and the rights of God each in its right place. Truth is not the slogan of one side; it is the word that sets every power and every person under the order of God.

This attitude is needed when we hear the word in the church as well. We must not rejoice that it is the word of God when the preacher supports our thoughts, and demote it to a human opinion when it exposes our greed. Conversely, we must not follow without confirmation because a famous preacher said it, nor reject even a right word because someone we dislike

delivered it. We should consider who spoke, but in the end we must judge whether the word agrees with the written word. Jesus did not show personal favoritism but taught the way of God in truth. We too must abandon the attitude of seeking only the answers favorable to our side, and receive the written word as it is.

The image engraved on the coin showed the share to be returned to Caesar

Jesus told them to show Him a denarius and asked whose image and inscription were engraved on it. The questioners answered right away that they were Caesar's. They used the imperial currency in daily life, and yet they had turned the tax question into a religious trap to catch Jesus. After the Lord had them confirm for themselves the image and inscription of Caesar engraved on the coin, He said, *"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25).*

The word to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's does not mean to acknowledge as unconditionally right every power and command of the world. Caesar is not God, and all the powers of the world are also under the rule and the judgment of God. But God has established order in this world and has allowed the authorities that maintain that order, so we must carry out our just responsibilities within it. That is why the Scripture says, *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1)*. Those who have received the remission of sin must, according to this word, keep the law, pay just taxes, and faithfully carry out their promises and contracts. If a person ignores public responsibility while saying that he serves only

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God, he is protecting his own convenience in the name of faith.

At the same time, the state and society cannot take the place of God. If a ruler tries to become the master of worship and conscience, or commands us to go against the word of God, the church must obey God rather than men. That there is a share to return to Caesar does not mean that what is God's may also be handed over to Caesar. The Christian does not take the order of the world lightly, yet believes that all authority is under God. So he does not make keeping the law and keeping the truth enemies of each other, and when the two actually collide, he must bear the loss and stand on the side of the word of God.

The things of Caesar do not refer to money alone; they make us think of the many responsibilities we carry in public relationships. We must return what we have borrowed, pay the wages promised to those who have worked, and keep the just rules set in common. We cannot blur accounts while trading in the name of the church, nor use other people's time and labor carelessly on the ground that we preach the gospel. One does not receive the remission of sin because one lives honestly. The remission of sin is received by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed. But believers must not rationalize falsehood and greed in the life that handles taxes, contracts, and promises. When a wrong is exposed, we must acknowledge that God is right and correct our thoughts and conduct according to the word.

Man, made in the image of God, belongs to God

After asking about the image and inscription on the coin, Jesus said to render to God the things that are God's. Luke chapter 20 does not directly explain what image is engraved on

man, but the first chapter of the Scriptures testifies, *"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him" (Genesis 1:27)*. If the coin bore the image of Caesar, man was made according to the image of the Creator. Therefore, what is to be given to God is not merely a part of our worship hours or a part of our income. Our life, our heart, our body, and all our days belong to the Creator.

The psalm proclaims, *"The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1)*. When we speak of offering something to God, we are not generously handing over what was originally our own possession. We are using what we received from the One who gave us life, according to His will. This is why we do not use the body God gave as a tool of lust, do not spread lies and wounds with our lips, and do not spend all our time only on works that raise our own name. Because we are the Creator's, we must use our body, our words, and our time according to the purpose He has spoken.

But sin kept man from returning to God what is God's. Though man was made in the image of God, he made himself his own master, and he gave over to the desires and idols of the world the heart that should have thanked and obeyed God. Just as the spies tried to catch Jesus with the tax question of Caesar, man uses even religious questions as tools to guard his own power. This hypocrisy—speaking righteous words outwardly while rebelling against God in the heart—is not a special evil found only in a few leaders. The Scripture testifies, *"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 rebellion revealed in the spies is also the face of us all, placed under sin through the one man Adam.

Before the command to return to God what belongs to Him,

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no one can put forward his own deeds. We have not loved God with all our heart, mind, and strength, and with the life we received we have exalted ourselves above God. However much we give in offerings and service, it cannot offset the rebellion of the heart, and the fact that we have paid our taxes honestly cannot pay the price of sin before God either. What we must know first, before thinking how much more to offer, is how a sinner who has lived robbing God of what is His can become one who belongs to God again. Jesus Christ came to give us that answer.

Jesus, who gave His own life as the price and bought us back

Jesus Christ, who is in His essence God, came to this earth in the body of a man to save the sinner who had been made in the image of God and yet rebelled against the Creator. Jesus is the Son of God, whose worth no coin engraved with Caesar's image could ever measure, yet He lived among us in the form of a servant. The sinless Lord received baptism from John the Baptist to fulfill all the righteousness God had appointed, and at that time He was passed all the sins of the world onto His own body.

After Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and was passed all the sins of the world, John the Baptist testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. According to this testimony, the Lord bore all the sins passed onto His body and carried them to the Cross of Golgotha. There He received the judgment of sin in our place, shed His blood, and actually died, paying in full the price of all the disobedience we had committed by using as we pleased the

life and the heart that should have been given to God. The Lord is not a king who became king by seizing what belongs to others; He is the King who gave His own life as a ransom and bought back us who had been His enemies.

And Jesus did not only die under the judgment in our place; He actually rose again. To those who came to the tomb the angel proclaimed, *"He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:6)*. The Lord lives again; He brought to completion the saving work He had carried out through His baptism and the Cross, and by conquering sin and death He accomplished all the righteousness of God and our salvation. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a transaction that a sinner completes by adding his own deeds as payment. It is the history of salvation in which the Creator paid the price of our sins in full with the life of His own Son.

When a person believes this word of salvation in his heart, God remits all his sins once and for all, gives him the Holy Spirit as a gift, and makes him His own child. Though the lack of the flesh remains, we who have received the remission of sin are before God not sinners but righteous people clothed with the righteousness of Jesus. We became righteous not because of moral achievement, but because we were washed of all our sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit made clear above. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who have become His children and leads them with the word.

2 Corinthians says, *"He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15)*. This word makes plain for whom the saved person must live. The Lord completed salvation once and for all, and the person who has become a child of God by believing that salvation has already left the way of living only for himself and chosen the way of living for the

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Lord. Therefore, it is fitting to follow the word of Jesus and to keep and preach the gospel together with the church.

The faith that builds up together the responsibilities of the world and the life given to God

Distinguishing the things of Caesar from the things of God does not mean splitting life into two unrelated realms. The weekday life of paying taxes and keeping contracts is also lived before God. The church life of worshiping and serving the gospel does not ignore the basic honesty of the world either. God is not One who hears only the words inside the chapel and does not look at how we handle money. We cannot boast that we have given God what is His while evading by deceit the just responsibilities we must bear in the world, nor can we say that we have given God even the sovereignty of our heart merely because we have done our public duties well.

Believers must not set their own thoughts and standards in the same place as the gospel. If we form factions with those who share our opinions and keep at a distance the members who think differently, or judge them as people without faith, we end up making parties within the church. People may differ in experience and judgment, but no one's thought can stand higher than the word of God. The church is not a place for enlarging one's own side; it is the place where those saved by the gospel of the water and the Spirit unite with Jesus at the center. Therefore, we must not try to push through our own claims, but must examine our thoughts before the word and keep and preach the gospel together with the other members. The owner of the church is not a man or any particular group but Jesus who saved us.

Also, those who belong to God must serve according to the portion the Lord has entrusted, without ignoring their own bodies and circumstances. The Father feeds His children with the word, protects them within the church, and entrusts to each person the work that fits him. Therefore, we must not promise what we cannot bear in order to win people's recognition, and when our body needs rest we must share our circumstances honestly. Asking the Lord's will and consulting with the church, we must use the time, the gifts, and the material things we have received in an orderly way for the benefit of the gospel. In a life that belongs to God there is the honesty of faith and long-lasting faithfulness rather than disorderly display.

The spies tried to catch Jesus in His words, but only the result remained that *"they marveled at His answer and kept silent" (Luke 20:26)*. Though they heard the wise answer, there is no record that they repented. Merely admiring and falling silent is not giving oneself to God. We must not stop at the place of being amazed at the word, but must let that word judge our sense of ownership and our loyalty. We must go beyond a faith that collects right answers, on to the faith that humbles the heart before the answer.

If you have not yet believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe from your heart the word of salvation made clear above. Jesus was passed all your sins onto His own body with the baptism He received from John; bearing those sins He was judged on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and then rose again, completing salvation. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all his sins and the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God. God has paid the whole debt of sin with the life of His Son and makes the believer His own child.

We who have already received the remission of sin know clearly that we are children who belong to God. Do not evade

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the just responsibilities of the world; render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. But never hand over your heart, your worship, and your eternal hope to any power, to money, or to people's evaluation. Our bodies, time, material things, and talents are God's possessions that the Lord bought back at the price of His own life. Let us use them following the leading of the Holy Spirit and according to the word; let us not form parties out of personal opinions; and let us keep and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with the church. Let us not remain people who merely marvel at the wise answer of Jesus and fall silent, but live with the faith that renders to God the things that are God's. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The hope of the resurrection and the Millennial Kingdom

< Luke 20:27-38 >

"Then some of the Sadducees, who deny that there is a resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: 'Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her as wife, and he died childless. Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife.' Jesus answered and said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But even Moses showed in the burning bush passage that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him.'"

In this world countless people are living in despair. But today

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I want to tell you the fact that for us there is no despair. As flowers bloom even in the fields a storm has passed through, even if this world ends and perishes, I believe that our Lord will begin the Millennial Kingdom anew. So I live in hope. For a while my heart was very heavy. There is the second coming of Jesus and there is the Rapture, so we must be born again and receive the remission of sin—this is the gospel I have preached all along. Yet the whole world is growing darker and darker. We are now facing the night before the storm. We are living in that stillness, that quiet, before the storm comes.

No one living in this world—scientists, philosophers, religious men, politicians, no one—sees the future brightly. The days ahead are not bright. So people live impatient at heart, unable to resolve their bitterness, coldly. Because no hope is visible in this world, people's hearts are growing impatient. So even the politicians worry. Their worry is that if some small country develops nuclear weapons, then when earthquakes and famines come upon this world and even the stored grain runs short, politicians might start a nuclear war. So they press very coercive policies to keep small countries from possessing nuclear weapons. It is because they know the terror of the nuclear bomb. They know, as clearly as looking at fire, that if a nuclear war breaks out this earth is ruined. So, hoping to prevent that danger, they make nuclear treaties, hold talks, and take economic measures.

The economy ahead is not bright either. The religious world is not bright. A dark age has come. Historians call the thousand medieval years of Catholicism the Dark Ages. During those thousand medieval years, in order to seize people's property, they framed a person with the false charge of heresy, arrested him, killed him, and took all the property he had. The religious leaders took it all.

That is why this period is called the Dark Ages. But however dark the world and however dark the future may look, if we discover the bright light behind that darkness, over beyond the mountain, we do not despair. For when everything of this world comes to an end, our Lord will bring us to life—He will first raise the righteous who have died, and will establish a paradise on this earth for a thousand years. When the time of this world is over, our Lord comes to this earth, raises the righteous, and has them live on this earth for a thousand years. We must look to that. If we cannot look to it, we have no hope.

If we do not see the hope of the Millennial Kingdom, that is despair. The Scriptures say that this Millennial Kingdom exists. Though the Scriptures speak of the Millennial Kingdom, people pay little attention to it. How could the Millennial Kingdom ever come about, they say; if a nuclear war breaks out this earth will be gone, so how could it be possible? Dear fellow believers, however, if you believe in God who made heaven and earth and all things in the universe, if you believe in the power of that God, it is possible.

Dear fellow believers, however devastated and however polluted this earth may now be, when our Lord Jesus Christ comes to this earth and makes all things new, it is possible. Dear fellow believers, it is possible. We will live there for a thousand years.

God brings us to life to reign for a thousand years

Today I want to speak about this. After the end comes upon this world, a paradise will surely be established on this earth for a thousand years. And what happens before this world meets its end is this: those who in this world received the remission of sin,

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were born again, and have been sleeping in the grave rise first. And we who are alive are also changed in a moment and go before God; and when our Lord comes again to this earth, we also come down together with Him, and on this earth, in the last days, those who did not receive the mark, those who were martyred, and we the righteous live together, mingled, for a thousand years. The Scriptures say so.

Dear beloved saints, our Lord says: as Your will is done in heaven, so let it be done on earth. It is the word of the Lord's Prayer. That we receive the remission of sin and go to the kingdom of heaven is already settled. We clearly believe that we have received the remission of sin and go to the kingdom of heaven. But when we look at this world, this world is now coming to an end. And we belong to this world. What, then, is the word of God? What matters is what God has said concerning this world, casting away all our thoughts and notions and the circumstances of this world.

God has said that He will raise the righteous in this world to reign for a thousand years, and will restore the Garden of Eden and have them live happily for a thousand years. This is the promise our God made in person. The very God who promised to remove our sins, who promised that a virgin would conceive a child, who promised that the Messiah would come—that God sent the Messiah. Our Lord came. And so He removed all our sins. In the same way, our God has promised to bring us to life on this earth for a thousand years, to have us reign, and to have us live happily for a thousand years. Dear fellow believers, if our Lord God has promised so, will you believe it? Yes, we believe.

The question of the Sadducees who denied the resurrection

Today I want to share the word about the resurrection and about the Millennial Kingdom. In the passage we read, Luke chapter 20 verses 27 to 38, some of the Sadducees, who claim there is no resurrection, came and asked: Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if a man dies, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. There were seven brothers; the first took a wife and died without children; the second and the third took her; and the seven likewise died without children; and afterward the woman also died. Since all seven had her as wife, whose wife does she become in the resurrection?—so they questioned.

Dear fellow believers, the people of Israel did this: to continue the family line, if the eldest son married and died without children, his younger brother went in to the widowed sister-in-law and begot children so that the line would continue. Now these Sadducees were politicians. These men believed in God, and yet they claimed that there is no resurrection, that there is no living again, that man does not live again, that once he dies it is over. So they argue like this: Jesus says there is a resurrection and that man lives again, and He has even raised the dead—well then, let us have a debate about it.

A man, the eldest son, married and died without children. Then his brother lived with the sister-in-law. In that way all seven brothers lived with the one woman. Then, when the resurrection comes, after the resurrection, whose wife does that woman become? Those who denied the resurrection deliberately asked a perplexing question. To this Jesus spoke: *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain*

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that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection" (Luke 20:34–36).

God is the God of the living

Dear fellow believers, what does resurrection mean? It means living again. Coming back to life—this is the resurrection. When we put on the resurrection, as children of God there is no death; we are equal to the angels; and having become children of the resurrection, we neither marry nor are given in marriage. It means that the children of God have a joy different from this world. And our Lord said to those who deny the resurrection: God is not the God of the dead but the God of the living; God is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; God is the God of the living.

Dear fellow believers, when we die and live again, our body and soul live again. If our body, once dead, did not live again, then Jesus Christ, our God and our Shepherd, would end up being the God of the dead. But God is to us the God of the living. In God's sight all people are alive. For God is the source of life. Because God is the One who gives life to all people, with God there is no death.

That is why, before God, the death of a man's body is spoken of as sleep. The Scriptures seldom say "died." They say one sleeps. In the Old Testament as well, God is called the God of the living. Moses was walking in the wilderness of Midian, and fire was burning in a thornbush. The fire burned, yet strangely the bush was not consumed. The fire kept burning, but the thornbush still stood. Moses thought it strange and drew near.

"Moses." "Yes." "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." "Yes, Lord." "I am your God, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." God appeared in that thornbush.

In this word also, our God is the God of the living. The people who were in this world have all died. Abraham died, Isaac died, and Jacob died. Moses was a descendant of Jacob. Yet God is saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—the God of the living. I am your God and also the God of those now alive; those who have died on this earth are sleeping; I am always the God of the living—that is what He is saying.

Our Lord, speaking of this, said that God is not the God of the dead but the God of the living. Since God is the God of the living, He must bring us to life.

Dear fellow believers, He must raise the bodies of all those who lived before us and left this world—only then is He the God of the living.

The resurrection of Jesus is our resurrection

Dear fellow believers, there are those who were born again before us and have left this world and are now sleeping in the grave. Do you believe that when our Lord descends to this earth, when He raptures us, He will first bring back to life those who are in the graves, raising them before us who are alive and taking them first to the kingdom of heaven? In 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 the apostle Paul says this.

Do not sorrow over those who sleep, he said; when our Lord comes, when He catches us up, when He raptures us, we who are alive will by no means precede those who sleep. He said that the

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Lord will first resurrect and catch up those who have fallen asleep, and that we who are alive will also be suddenly changed in body and go up. Our Lord brings us back to life. Dear fellow believers, do you believe in the resurrection?

Dear fellow believers, do you believe that Jesus rose again? Yes, we believe. Then the life of Jesus is our life. The death of Jesus was our death; the baptism Jesus received from John was our baptism; the punishment of the Cross was our punishment; and Jesus rising from the dead on the third day became the ground of our living again. Jesus took upon Himself all our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. With that baptism He bore our sins, shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment in our place, died, and rose again on the third day, becoming our Savior. Therefore, the one who believes this gospel receives the remission of sin, and that believer participates in the first resurrection, the resurrection of life. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Yes. The rising of Jesus was our resurrection. So we will first make sure of this—whether we believe this resurrection or not—and then go on to hear concretely the word about the resurrection as it appears in the Scriptures.

Dear fellow believers, there is a resurrection. If I am still alive when the end comes upon this earth, I believe that I will be changed in a moment before God without tasting death. As Elijah went up in a chariot of fire, as Enoch walked with God and God took him to the kingdom of heaven, I believe He will take me. I believe He will change me into a perfect body, a spiritual body. I believe He will change me into a spiritual body like Elijah and Moses who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration—a spiritual body that can go anywhere it wishes regardless of time and space, that does not get sick, to which even a wall like this is no barrier. I believe that God will take me,

and our saints, and all our born-again righteous ones. When the end comes upon this world, our Lord descends again. He comes.

Dear fellow believers, we can believe it with certainty because the Lord died on the Cross and rose again. Because the Lord rose again, He will surely bring us to life. It was to bring us to life that the Lord rose again. So, because Jesus Christ has risen, we also surely rise. If Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead, we also would surely die. Dear fellow believers, do you see? Yes.

Let us first look at 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 12 to 19. *"Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable."* Amen. Jesus Christ has risen. Jesus Christ has risen and become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep from among the dead.

Dear fellow believers, Jesus Christ bore our sins in our place, died, and lived again. He rose. That He became the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep means that He became the firstfruits of those who suffered the death of the body and lived again. Dear fellow believers, in the old days Enoch and Elijah were raptured. Without tasting the death of the body, God took them. But Jesus tasted death on this earth. Who is the very first to have tasted the death of the body and risen again? Who is the

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One who lived again? It is Jesus. Jesus has risen. Dear fellow believers, do you believe that Jesus rose again? Yes. Then, just as Jesus rose again, we also rise. Do you believe it? Yes. We come back to life in the same way. Then let us look at the word and examine the order of the resurrection.

The order of the resurrection

Let us read together 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verses 20 to 25. *"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet."* Amen.

Dear fellow believers, here the order of the resurrection is spoken. In verse 23 our Lord says: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. Who is the firstfruits of the resurrection? Who is the One who suffered the death of the body and rose again from that death? It is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the firstfruits of the resurrection. Who is second? Those who are Christ's at His coming. His coming means His return. It refers to the Rapture that takes place when our Lord comes again. You see? Those who are His—those who belong to Him are the righteous. Then where is the proof that they are righteous? The word righteous is not written here, but

in verse 24 the word says: *"Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death" (1 Corinthians 15:24–26).*

The firstfruits of the resurrection is Jesus. When Jesus comes again, He raptures us. Those who are His—those who belong to Him—means the born-again. And after that there is the end; the end is those who will be judged. The Book of Revelation speaks of the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked separately. It says there is a difference of time between the two resurrections. The resurrection of the righteous is the resurrection that takes place when Jesus Christ comes to this earth, and He has those who are resurrected reign for a thousand years and live for a thousand years. And it says that after they have lived a thousand years, the wicked are resurrected.

Let us read Revelation chapter 20 verses 4 to 6. *"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."* Amen.

Our Lord speaks of the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked. In the order of the resurrection, the first is Jesus Christ; the second, those who are His at His coming; the third, those who will be judged afterward—that is, our Lord

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says He will resurrect the wicked. We believe this. By how many years do the resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked differ? They differ by a thousand years. Here it says that those who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years, and that the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. The Gospel of John also says so.

Let us look at John chapter 5 verses 24 to 29. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."* So the word says that those who have done good come out to the resurrection of life.

The resurrection of the righteous and the resurrection of the wicked

The righteous who have done good come out to obtain eternal blessing and happiness and to live forever. And those who have done evil come out to the resurrection of judgment. So, as for the wicked: in Revelation it says that those who had the witness of Jesus, those who were beheaded, and those who did not receive the mark on their hands lived and reigned for a

thousand years, and that the rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Both the righteous and the wicked are resurrected, but there is a clear difference in outcome and in time. The resurrection of the righteous takes place a thousand years ahead of the resurrection of the wicked. The righteous who participate in the first resurrection are blessed; the second death has no power over them; and they become priests of God and of Christ and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

Dear fellow believers, do you have the witness of Jesus? Is the fact that Jesus is your sure Savior in your heart? Yes. Then you and I have that witness. But those who do not know this gospel and do not know the truth of this word—do their hearts have the witness of Jesus? No, they do not. They have no witness. Dear fellow believers, we can discern this. Those who have the witness of Jesus, those who did not receive the mark in the time of tribulation, and those who were martyred in the time of tribulation reign with Christ for a thousand years.

Dear fellow believers, those who have the witness of Christ live for a thousand years. The rest, who have no witness, do not live until the thousand years. The wicked do not live again until that thousand years is completed. Those who have done good come forth to the resurrection of eternal life, and those who have done evil go out to the resurrection of judgment. Both are resurrected, but the outcomes are entirely different. For what does our Lord bring us back to life? To have us reign on this earth for a thousand years. Then why do we need this earthly Millennial Kingdom? Why must our Lord build the Millennial Kingdom on this earth? We have all received the remission of sin and entered the kingdom of heaven, and the Scriptures often speak of giving rewards. Now suppose that in the kingdom of heaven He said, “You went through many hardships on that

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earth—stand at this height," and to a person who had barely come to church after receiving the remission of sin He said, "You go stand down below." If that place made such discriminations, what kind of heaven would it be?

Dear fellow believers, if there were ranks upon entering heaven, that place would not be heaven. So our God has said that He will give rewards, that He will repay our labors, that He will wipe away our tears—and where is that? On earth, for a thousand years, He makes all things new, brings back to life all the souls of the righteous who slept in this earth, and repays them for all they labored and suffered on this earth. He rewards them. Dear fellow believers, you see? He rewards like that, and when the thousand years have fully passed, He then brings all the wicked also back to life. He raises them all and carries out the judgment of the Great White Throne. Those whose names are written in the Book of Life enter the eternal kingdom of God, and those whose names are not in the Book of Life enter the eternal pit of fire. That is eternal. As Jesus Christ lives forever, it is an eternal judgment.

Man must be born twice. He must be born again. He must believe in Jesus and be born again. He believes in Jesus, but he must receive eternal life and the remission of sin. He must obtain new life. This word tells us that we need a second birth. God is speaking of two times to every human life. He is speaking of two times to all things. One must be born twice. The resurrection of the righteous is a thousand years earlier than that of the wicked. Know this. When this world grows dark and the curtain of this world falls, the resurrection of the righteous takes place at the same time, all together. Dear fellow believers, you see? Anyone who wants to raise an objection, speak after the message is finished. Anyone may speak.

The word says that between the righteous and the wicked

there is surely a difference of time even in the resurrection. The apostle Paul also said in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 that the firstfruits of the resurrection is Jesus Christ; the second, those who are His at His coming; and after that, the end. The Scripture clearly says, *"The end."*

Dear fellow believers, if there were no kingdom of heaven, what would I do? We cannot be without heaven. And if there were no earthly paradise in this world, what would I do? Why do we believe in Jesus through such hardship? Why are there so many afflictions when we believe in Jesus? Why are we persecuted for believing in Jesus? If there were no earthly kingdom and everyone alike simply went to heaven, well, neither you nor I are fools. There would be no need to unite with the church and no need to suffer for the Lord. Believe in Jesus and everyone goes to heaven—do you believe that? Dear fellow believers, then who would do the work of God, and who would preach this gospel God has entrusted? What need would I have to do all this? Of course one would still do it for what is right; but what reason would I have to labor this much? I am living truly happily. Yet why must I be despised, persecuted, and cast off before people I know? It is because there is the hope of the earthly paradise.

Dear fellow believers, our Lord speaks of rewards. He said, I will give you authority to rule over ten cities. He said we reign for a thousand years in this earthly kingdom. When the Lord comes to this earth with us at that time, many people who have not yet died are living on this earth. They are our servants. At that time there will be no such feelings toward them as we might have now. Since our Lord begins after shutting the Devil up in the bottomless pit, there will be no such feelings. The word says that those who have been resurrected with spiritual bodies and those who are on this earth in the flesh live together for a

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thousand years. Where there is no sin, they live. Since sin entered through the Devil, He shuts that Devil up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. So we reign for a thousand years.

Dear fellow believers, we are those who participate in the first resurrection. If we do not participate in the first resurrection, who will? It says clearly here: first, those who have the witness of Jesus; second, those who were beheaded for Jesus Christ; third, those who did not receive the mark—He divided them into these three kinds. Those who will participate in the first resurrection are clearly divided into these three groups.

Our Lord is One who never blurs what He has spoken. We know clearly that the resurrection of the righteous precedes the resurrection of the wicked by a thousand years. The resurrection of the wicked is a resurrection for receiving judgment. The resurrection of the righteous is a resurrection for receiving reward and for inheriting the kingdom God has promised. We also will surely live again. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Yes. We come back to life.

We must preach the way of the resurrection

Dear saints, we must live in hope. Even if this world perishes, we do not perish. Even if this world ends, we do not end. Even when this world lowers its curtain, the Lord comes to this earth and reigns. He reigns together with those who are His and with His people. And those who are not His He brings back to life after the thousand years and casts into the lake burning with eternal fire and brimstone forever. Who is there? The Devil is there too. All those who followed the Devil are there. Those who believed in Jesus and followed Jesus Christ are all present both

in the time of the Millennial Kingdom and in the kingdom of heaven. This is the Millennial Kingdom. Dear fellow believers, do you see? Yes.

Dear fellow believers, living in this world is bleak. If Jesus Christ had not risen, it would be bleak. But Jesus Christ has risen. Our Lord brings us to life. The word says that if there were no living again after death, we would be the most pitiable of all people. If there were no living again, how miserable it would be! From this word I receive true hope. If there were no earthly paradise—if there were not even the earthly paradise the Jehovah's Witnesses speak of—I could only be discouraged while believing in Jesus, and there would be no need to preach the gospel anymore. I would have to look after my own body. At this last time, why must I preach this gospel? If there were no earthly kingdom, I would have to fold up the work of preaching the gospel as one folds up a stall spread out in the market. Now would be exactly the time to fold it.

But we have hope because the Millennial Kingdom is waiting for us. Therefore we must convey this resurrection to people. There is a resurrection; you will surely live again; if you believe in Jesus Christ and receive the remission of sin, then even though your body dies you will surely come out to the resurrection of the righteous; you will obtain new life, reign on earth, and go to the kingdom of heaven and live forever—this we must preach. But if you do not believe in Jesus Christ, you will surely live again and enter the eternal pit of fire—this too we must preach. We must convey this resurrection, the fact that we live again.

Dear fellow believers, what must we preach now? What is most important in the Christian faith? The remission of sin and this resurrection, this living again. Christianity is the way of the resurrection. It is the way in which dead life, the dead heart, the

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dead body live again. This is Christianity. It is the way of following God and believing God.

We have preached the gospel until now. But in this age, what gospel must we preach? Together with the gospel we must preach the way of the resurrection. Even if this world ends, we live again; and when we live again, having received the remission of sin, we live in the Millennial Kingdom—this we must preach. If someone asks where that word is, it is right here. If someone asks whether it is not a mere symbol, it is not. Our Lord spoke the way of the resurrection countless times. The disciples of Jesus all preached the way of the resurrection. The apostle Paul, John, and all the servants of God preached the way of the resurrection—that Jesus Christ has risen, that He lives again. And they preached this way of faith, that we live again. What must we preach now? We must preach the way of the resurrection—the way of the resurrection, the fact that we live again.

Dear fellow believers, what is man's greatest concern? It is living again. Dear fellow believers, what is the greatest concern of our life? It is whether we can live forever without dying. Whether we can escape death. Dear fellow believers, there is a way to escape death. It is to believe in Jesus Christ, who is the way of the resurrection. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you live again; you rise a thousand years before the wicked and live; you live beautifully for a thousand years; and in the eternal kingdom, in the eternal heaven, through Jesus Christ you enjoy life without end and live forever. This is the way of the resurrection. We must preach the way of the resurrection.

Dear fellow believers, do you see? Yes. We must preach the way of the resurrection. It is not something else we preach; we must preach the way of the resurrection. What must we preach together with the gospel? We must preach the way of the resurrection. And we must hold the hope of the resurrection.

We have the hope of the Millennial Kingdom

You and I, watching this world grow dark—politics, the economy, and all religion growing dark—watching people's hearts and the state of the world, let us not let our own hearts grow dark as well. When this world ends, our Lord will bring us back to life, rebuild this earth, and make all things new; He will spread out on this earth a new heaven and new earth, an earthly paradise, where one may put a hand into the den of a viper and not be bitten. I want you to know this fact.

And when we are resurrected and live again on this earth, we will then meet Abraham as well. We will meet in the earthly paradise that thief on the one side, who was crucified with Jesus at His right and obtained Paradise through faith in Jesus Christ. Dear fellow believers, do you see? Yes. The paradise spoken of there is exactly this. The words earthly paradise mean this. Heaven and Paradise are clearly different. Dear fellow believers, you see? We will meet then. We will meet Paul, and we will meet John. Meeting them, receiving our reward for a thousand years, reigning, we will live for a thousand years in an age when there is no Devil. Our Lord Jesus Christ is also with us there.

Dear fellow believers, we must live in hope. Even though this world ends, our life does not end. Neither our soul nor our body ends. Even when this world ends, Jesus Christ comes to this earth. With Jesus Christ we reign, and together with Him we receive and enjoy new life for a thousand years, and we also enjoy eternal new life and live forever. Dear fellow believers, let us become saints who preach the gospel in hope, serving and following the Lord. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Yes.

Dear fellow believers, I believe. I praise our Lord. I give thanks to our Lord who has given hope to you and me—to us the righteous. If He had not given this hope, if He had not recorded

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this in the Book of Revelation, if He had not recorded this promise throughout the Scriptures, the person who received the remission of sin would be the most pitiable of all. For this is our hope. It would be so if only the kingdom of heaven were our hope and there were nothing on this earth to hope for.

Dear fellow believers, however, even if everything disappears, when our Lord comes again He rebuilds this earth. He reigns. We will live in the earthly paradise. We give thanks before our Lord who has made us live in the earthly paradise. Let us give thanks together in prayer and close. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Christ, the Son of David and the Lord of David

< Luke 20:41-47 >

"And He said to them, 'How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Therefore David calls Him "Lord"; how is He then his Son?' Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, 'Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation.'"

The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders asked about the authority of Jesus; the spies tried to catch Him in His words over the tax question; and the Sadducees brought a complicated case to deny the resurrection. Jesus answered every question with the wisdom of God, and finally no one dared to ask Him anything more. Then Jesus asked them a question. If the earlier questions were traps to bring Jesus down, the Lord's question revealed the center of salvation that people must know. It is the question of who the Christ is.

People said that the Christ is the Son of David. That was a right confession grounded in the promise of the Scriptures. God

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had promised to raise up an eternal King among the descendants of David, and Jesus did come in the body of a man through the lineage of David. But it was not enough to know the Christ only as the Son of David. So the Lord asked, *"How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David?" (Luke 20:41)* and presented the psalm in which David himself called the Christ *"my Lord."* The Christ is not an ordinary descendant who received life from David; He is the Lord whom David must worship and obey.

Today as well, people may speak of Jesus only as a great teacher, a man who practiced love, a friend of the oppressed. Such descriptions may point to part of the ministry of Jesus, but they do not make clear who He is. Jesus is not one of many saints, nor a religious leader who developed human wisdom. He is in His essence God; He made man, He saves from sin, and He is the Lord who will judge all people at the last. Respecting His teaching and believing Him as the Lord of my life and my salvation are different things. Salvation does not begin with following a few good sayings of Jesus; it begins with believing in the heart who Jesus is and what He has accomplished.

The Lord who came through the lineage of David yet existed before David

When the angel announced the birth of Jesus to Mary, he said, *"The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32)* and then proclaimed, *"He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:33)*. Jesus was born into the house of David according to the promise. He had the body of a true man; He experienced hunger and weariness; He lived within the same history and time as we do. Therefore, the words the Son of David are not an expression

to be discarded but a promise fulfilled.

But the angel of Bethlehem told the shepherds, *"There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11)*. The baby born in the city of David is the Lord. Jesus is not one who was born and then, receiving people's respect, became divine. The Son of God, who was with the Father from eternity, came clothed in the body of a man. As a man Jesus was born a descendant of David, but since He is God by nature, He is the Lord who made David. Jesus is the true God who came to this earth in the body of a man to save us.

So Jesus asked, *"Therefore David calls Him 'Lord'; how is He then his Son?" (Luke 20:44)*. This question does not erase the promise that the Christ would come through the lineage of David; it makes clear that His lineage alone cannot fully explain the Christ. The promised King was born in history as the descendant of David, yet He is the Lord who exists from eternity, and He did not receive from men the authority to establish His endless kingdom either.

That He who is God became true man shows the love of God toward sinners. He did not fix us from afar with commands only; He put on the body of a man and entered into history. Though He had no sin, He suffered the contempt and pain that sinners receive, and He went down at last to the place of death. Jesus came among us as true man, and as true God He holds the authority to save all mankind from sin and death. In the words the Son of David and the Lord of David, the divinity and the humanity of the Savior are revealed together.

Who do you believe Jesus is? I am not asking about the titles long used in church. I am asking whether you believe Him as God who washes away your sins and gives you eternal life. If you think of Jesus as merely someone a little wiser than yourself, you can follow His words when they agree with your thoughts

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and push them away when they are uncomfortable. But if you believe that He is the Lord who made you and the King who judges and saves you, you cannot set your own judgment as the final standard before His word. Like David, you come to call Christ my Lord and to humble your heart before His word.

The King who sits at the right hand of God and conquers all His enemies

David, moved by the Holy Spirit, said, *"The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" (Luke 20:42–43).* Here appear the relationship between God the Father and Christ, and the victory of Christ. The right hand of God is not an honorable seat obtained among men but the seat of kingly authority and glory. Though men rejected and opposed Jesus, they could not break the will of God; God exalted Him and revealed His kingly authority. Sin, death, and the power of the Devil will finally be placed under the feet of Christ.

The kingship of Jesus is different from the way of worldly rulers. The Lord, who is in His essence God, came in the body of a man to bring to life the sinners who had become His enemies. Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)* and received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and with that baptism He was passed all the sins of the world onto His own body. The next day John the Baptist saw Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).* According to this word, the Lord bore those sins that had been passed on to Him all the way to the Cross, and there He was judged in our place, shed His blood, and actually died. And He rose from the dead and conquered sin and death, completing

all the righteousness of God and our salvation, just as the angel proclaimed, *"He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:6)*.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which the highest King saved us. The leaders who tried to seize Jesus sought to protect their own positions and lives, but Jesus gave His own life and brought to life us who were His enemies. The person who believes in his heart what the Lord did—receiving baptism from John the Baptist and being passed our sins, dying under the judgment on the Cross, and rising again—receives the remission of all his sins and the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God. The Highest One humbled Himself for sinners, and God exalted the Christ who rose from the dead, revealing Him as the true Victor.

The Scripture testifies that God has exalted Jesus and *"given Him the name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9)* and that at last *"every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:11)*. Now many people do not acknowledge the lordship of Jesus, but that fact does not diminish His kingship. The day comes when every enemy becomes His footstool. Therefore, while alive, one must hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe it in the heart, and confess Jesus Christ as the Lord of salvation.

Those who have received the remission of sin live by faith, because He who gave His life for us has promised that He conquers and rules all His enemies. Even when the powers of the world oppose the gospel and our flesh is weak and shaken, the Head of the church is Christ, and the final victory already belongs to Him. We do not grow impatient to produce results by our own strength; believing the word of the King, we continue the work of the gospel entrusted to us. Because the Lord reigns, we rise again even in discouragement, and even without people's praise we can keep and preach the truth.

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The scribes who loved the best seats coveted the Lord's place

After making clear the exaltation of Christ, Jesus immediately said to beware of the scribes. The two words are not separate subjects. David called Christ Lord and humbled himself, but the scribes wanted people to exalt them. The Lord then warned, *"Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts" (Luke 20:46)*. With their offices and outward appearance, they drew to themselves the honor and the central place that should be returned to the Lord.

This does not mean that long robes, greetings, or front seats are sins in themselves. A person entrusted with responsibility may need a fitting place and fitting courtesy. Jesus pointed out the heart of the scribes of that day that desired and loved them. Nor does it mean that an office-bearer of the church who has received the remission of sin is automatically of the same standing as these scribes, for he has already become a child of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But even in the saved, thoughts can arise in the flesh—feeling slighted when people's greetings decrease, losing the will to serve when one's name is not mentioned, harboring rivalry when another stands in front. If one uses his office not as a channel for serving God and the righteous but as an ornament displaying his own worth, he must acknowledge that wrong before the word and correct his thoughts and conduct.

In the church, the one who goes before must not absolutize his own will on the ground that he knows the word better or has been entrusted with important decisions. The Lord is one, and every office-bearer is a servant under His word. If he forces

respect from the members or brands as faithless those who do not agree with him, he ends up using the kingship of Christ to build his own authority. A true leader does not make the members his own people but establishes them as people who belong to Jesus by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He should desire that the Lord's name remain rather than his own name, and that the word of Scripture, rather than his own words, be engraved on the hearts of the righteous.

We must not regard closeness to famous people as the height of faith. Which seat we sit in, who recognizes us, and by what office title we are called do not decide our standing before God. The person who has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is already a child of God. That standing is not completed by obtaining the best seat in the synagogue. The person who believes that he is a child loved by the Father does not become smaller by doing his work in the background, and can rejoice together when another member is used. It is enough to work for the benefit of the gospel in the place the Lord has entrusted to each one.

Watch over those who must be protected, before the word

The scribes not only loved people's respect; they also seized and exploited the property of widows who should have been protected. The Lord said, *"Who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers" (Luke 20:47)*. In those days a widow stood in a weak position, hard to protect economically and socially. The men who claimed to know the law devoured the property of such people, while before others they displayed

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godliness with long prayers. The length of their prayers could not cover their greed; rather, it exposed their hypocrisy more clearly.

The prayer offered to God and the life that deals with the weak are not separated. One must not call God Father in prayer and then, in daily life, exploit the member the Father said to care for. If a person claims to act for the gospel while forcing a disadvantageous decision on someone who lacks information, or borrows money on the strength of trust in his faith and evades responsibility, or demands the silence of the weak with the authority of his office, he is walking the way of the scribes. God is not One who hears only long prayers; He also sees the relationships and the conduct that follow the prayer.

The Church of God must protect widows, the poor, and powerless members, not use them as material for its own growth. When giving help, we must not expose a person's circumstances before others to boast of our good deed, nor use the weak position of the one helped to demand submission. In handling finances there must be clear standards and processes of confirmation, so that the rights of the weak do not vanish on the word of any one person. The church protects its weak members in this way because it believes the heart of the Lord who humbled Himself for sinners and follows His word.

Jesus warned that the hypocritical scribes *"will receive greater condemnation" (Luke 20:47)*. This is the warning of judgment given to the scribes who rejected Jesus and used their religious knowledge and position for evil. The sin of deceiving the weak with religious words is not light, for it binds people's consciences by using God, and the Lord who knows the craftiness of the heart will judge it with justice at the last. This does not mean that we who have received the remission of sin are placed under judgment again when we do wrong in the flesh.

But since we can misuse the influence entrusted to us, we must examine before the word for whom we are using that influence. When a wrong is exposed, we must not hide behind our office or justify ourselves, but acknowledge that God is right and correct our thoughts and conduct.

The highest Lord came down to the lowest place

The scribes used religion to exalt themselves, but Jesus, the Lord of David, saved sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit made clear above. He did not demand people's respect but received mockery and blows, and He gave His own life to pay the full price of our sins. The scribes devoured the property of the weak, but the Lord paid the price of sin with His own life, and God declares righteous those who believe this word of salvation and makes them His own children. We become righteous not by climbing to the best seats of men, but by believing the righteousness the Lord has completed.

Even in the person who has received this salvation, desires arise in the flesh to be exalted and to be recognized by people. Let us not dress up that desire as spiritual zeal; when the word exposes it, let us acknowledge that the word of God is right. If we have done wrong and harmed a member, let us apologize and set right, as far as we can, the harm we caused, and let us use the office entrusted to us rightly for the gospel and for souls. The person who has already become a child of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must correct his thoughts and conduct in this way and follow the word of the Father.

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Let us live exalting Christ alone

Jesus asked in another place, *"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46)*. David called Christ Lord and exalted Him above himself. The scribes also called on God and prayed long, but in life they loved the best seats and devoured the property of widows. What matters is not how often we say the title Lord, but whether we believe His salvation and are ruled by His word.

If you still know Jesus only as an excellent human teacher, hear today the confession of David. Jesus is true man who came as the Son of David, and true God whom David called my Lord. Believe in the Lord who completed the salvation that washes away all your sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Acknowledge that your good deeds and religious position cannot be the ground of salvation; believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of all your sins, receive the Holy Spirit, and become a child of God. The Lord clothes with perfect righteousness the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We who have already received the remission of sin—let us exalt Christ alone in the church. Let us not make our office and knowledge means of obtaining people's greetings and the best seats, but use them so that the believers may believe the word and stand firm. Let us not make prayer an ornament shown to people, but offer prayer that relies on God and entrusts our actual lives to Him. Let us not devour what belongs to widows, the poor, and the members who have no strength to speak, but protect their rights and their faith. Let us handle material things and decisions transparently; when a wrong is exposed, let us not hide behind our office, but acknowledge the wrong thoughts and conduct and correct them according to the word of the Lord.

Christ, the Lord of David, will make all His enemies His footstool at the right hand of God. That King came down to the lowest place for us and delivered us from sin and death with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since the saved person has already chosen the way of living for the Lord, it is fitting not to contend for the high places of men but to carry out faithfully the work entrusted to him. Do not call Him Lord with the lips only; follow the word, unite with the church, and keep and preach the gospel. Let us live exalting only Jesus Christ, who came to our side as the Son of David and reigns forever as the Lord of David. ✉

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CHAPTER

21

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Luke Chapter 21

Part 1. Understanding the text passage by passage and its gospel-based interpretation

Luke chapter 21 begins with the offering of the poor widow and speaks of the destruction of the temple, the fall of Jerusalem, persecution and the signs of the end, the second coming of the Son of Man, and the life of watching and praying. We will examine each text in turn through the general interpretation of its context and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. The offering of the poor widow (21:1–4)

"And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, 'Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.'"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus sees the rich putting their gifts into the treasury and a poor widow putting in two mites. A mite was a very small amount of money in those days.

The rich gave a part out of their abundance, but the widow

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gave all her livelihood out of her poverty. Jesus does not evaluate the worth of an offering by its amount alone; He looks at how completely a person has given within his own circumstances.

This word must not be used to mean that a poor person must offer even the money needed for living. Immediately before this, Jesus rebuked the religious leaders who devour widows' houses. So this scene shows the widow's deep devotion, and at the same time it makes us reflect on the reality of a religious system that demanded everything from the very person it should have cared for.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—God looks at the heart and the circumstances rather than the amount given

Jesus saw the rich making their offerings and a poor widow giving two mites. The rich gave a part out of their abundance, but the widow gave all her livelihood out of her poverty. To people, the large offerings of the rich looked great, but Jesus said that the widow had given more.

This does not mean that the larger the amount of an offering, the greater the faith. God knows a person's circumstances, and even the purpose and the heart with which he gives. Nor is this a word that forces all saints to offer their whole livelihood. Immediately before this, Jesus rebuked the scribes who devour widows' houses. Therefore, this word must never be used to take the property of the weak or to force offerings.

Neither was the widow's offering a price that bought the remission of sin. A sinner cannot buy salvation with material things or sacrifice. Salvation was accomplished by Jesus, who

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took upon Himself our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The person who knows this salvation and believes it in his heart and has received the remission of sin serves the gospel with his material things, his time, and his life in gratitude for the grace he has received.

2. The destruction of the temple and various signs (21:5–11)

"Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 'These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.' So they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?' And He said: 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am He," and, "The time has drawn near." Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.' Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."

General interpretation of the text

When people praise the temple adorned with beautiful stones and donations, Jesus says that the time will come when not one

stone will be left upon another.

When the disciples ask when this will happen and what signs there will be, Jesus first warns them not to be deceived. Even if many claim to be the Messiah or say that the time has drawn near, they must not follow them.

Wars and uprisings, earthquakes, famines, and pestilences will occur, but these alone must not lead to the immediate conclusion that the end of the world has come. Jesus says that these things must take place, but the end does not come immediately.

The purpose of this word is not to calculate the date of the end or to link every disaster to a particular prophecy. It is a teaching to trust God without being shaken by false claims even in confusing situations.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Though the temple falls, the word of the Lord is eternal

People boasted of the temple adorned with beautiful stones and donations. But Jesus said that not one stone would be left upon another; all would be thrown down. This word was fulfilled exactly in history when the Roman army destroyed Jerusalem and the temple.

Visible religious buildings, institutions, and human glory are not eternal. However great and beautiful they look, they cannot take the place of the truth of salvation God has established. The foundation of true faith is not the outward form of a temple or human tradition but the word of salvation Jesus accomplished.

Jesus said not to follow false people even when they put forward the name of Christ and say that the time has drawn near.

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Nor should we hastily fix the date of the end just because wars, tumults, earthquakes, and famines appear. The believer must not be deceived by human prophecies, date calculations, or claims that one survives only by fleeing to a particular place. He must believe the written word and preach the gospel in his own place.

3. Testify in the midst of persecution (21:12–19)

"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls."

General interpretation of the text

Before the various disasters take place, the disciples will be arrested because of the name of Jesus, delivered to synagogues and prisons, and made to stand before kings and rulers.

But such persecution becomes an opportunity to testify to the gospel. The disciples do not need to worry excessively about how to defend themselves, for Jesus will give them words and wisdom that their opponents cannot withstand.

This does not mean that they should make no preparation at all in ordinary times; it is the promise that even in the moment of persecution they cannot control, Jesus does not abandon His disciples.

The disciples may be betrayed by family and friends and may even be put to death. Yet the word that not a hair of their head will be lost does not mean that there will be no physical suffering at all. It means that even death cannot take away the ultimate life and salvation God gives.

The disciple must gain life by enduring in hardship. Patience is not a merit that purchases salvation; it is the form in which faith that trusts Jesus continues even under persecution.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Tribulation becomes an opportunity to testify to the gospel

Jesus said that the disciples would be seized and persecuted because of His name and would stand before kings and men of power. Believing the gospel does not make all the sufferings and persecutions of the world disappear. One may be betrayed by family, relatives, and friends, and some may even lose the life of the body.

But the Lord uses such things as opportunities to testify to the gospel. When a believer stands before men of power, he does not prepare every answer by his own wisdom alone. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in the person who has received the remission of sin, gives the words and the wisdom to testify to the gospel, and also gives the strength to endure tribulation. Peter and Stephen in the Acts of the Apostles, who boldly testified to Jesus Christ even before men of power, show this.

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The word *"not a hair of your head shall be lost"* does not mean that the believer suffers no physical harm at all. In the previous verse Jesus had already said that some of the disciples would be put to death. This word means that even tribulation and death cannot take away the life and the eternal inheritance of the saints God has saved.

The word *"By your patience possess your souls"* also does not mean that a person buys salvation by the merit of long endurance. Salvation was completed by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection. Patience is the fruit in which the person who has known and believed this gospel and received the remission of sin keeps the faith he has received to the end, strengthened by the help of the Holy Spirit.

4. The fall of Jerusalem (21:20–24)

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus says that when they see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they should know that the desolation of the city is near. At that time those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must get out.

This word can be understood in direct connection with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Roman army in A.D. 70. Jesus gave the realistic warning not to remain in the city out of mistaken religious confidence when it was besieged, but to flee.

The word that Jerusalem will be trampled *"until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"* means that even the rule of Gentile powers has a limit God has set. There are various interpretations of the exact period and the manner of fulfillment, but the final authority over history belongs not to human empires but to God.

This declaration of judgment must not be used as hostility toward the whole Jewish people. Jesus Himself wept for Jerusalem, and at the center of this word are warning and sorrow for the city that refused the calling of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The fall of Jerusalem was a judgment that came according to the word

Jesus said that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they should know that its desolation was near. He warned concretely that those in Judea should flee to the mountains and those inside the city should come out.

The fall of Jerusalem was not an accidental event of history. It was the judgment on the unbelief that rejected the prophets

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God sent and finally rejected even Jesus, who came as the Savior. The fall of Jerusalem that Jesus foretold was fulfilled in history, and Jerusalem came to be trampled until the times of the Gentiles God has appointed are fulfilled.

This event shows that not only the promise of salvation but also the warning of judgment of God is surely fulfilled. God is longsuffering, but He does not overlook the sin of rejecting salvation forever.

But to save sinners from judgment, Jesus first took upon Himself the judgment of our sins. After bearing all our sins with the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose from the dead. While we are alive, we must know this gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe it in our hearts, and receive the remission of sin.

5. The coming of the Son of Man and the completion of salvation (21:25–28)

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."

General interpretation of the text

He says that there will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the

stars, and that on the earth the nations will fear because of the roaring of the sea and the waves. These cosmic expressions show the order of the existing world being shaken and the decisive reign of God appearing.

Then people will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. This has the language of Daniel chapter 7 as its background and reveals that Jesus will complete judgment and salvation with the authority of God.

To the people of the world it is a fearful event, but to those who follow Jesus it is the time when salvation is completed. Therefore, He says that when these things begin, they should not give in to fear but lift up their heads, because their salvation has drawn near.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The second coming is the completion of redemption for the saints

In the last days signs will appear in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. The people of the world will fall into fear as they think of the things that are coming. For not even with the riches, the power, and the science of the world can anyone escape the final judgment of God.

When Jesus comes again, He comes with power and great glory so that all can see Him. Unlike the false christs who claim to have appeared secretly in some particular place, the second coming of the Lord is a clear event that no one can deny.

But to the saints who have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the second coming is not a day that brings only fear. Jesus told them to stand up and lift up their heads, because their redemption has drawn

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near. The believer has already received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit as a gift, and when the Lord comes again, the saints who have died will rise, and the bodies of the saints who are alive will also be changed gloriously. Therefore, the second coming is the day of hope when the saints come to live with the Lord forever.

6. The parable of the fig tree (21:29–33)

"Then He spoke to them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

General interpretation of the text

Just as one can know that summer is near when leaves come out on the fig tree and all the trees, Jesus says that when they see the things He has spoken of happening, they should know that the kingdom of God is near.

There are various interpretations of the word *"this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place."* Some take it to mean that the generation of Jesus' own day would experience the fall of Jerusalem; others interpret it as referring to the generation that witnesses the final signs.

In the immediate context, it can be seen as including first of all the meaning that some of the people of that day would see the

fall of Jerusalem, which took place in A.D. 70. At the same time, that event has the character of showing in advance the final judgment of God that will be accomplished in the future.

Heaven and earth may pass away, but the words of Jesus never pass away. Rather than overly calculating the dates of events, what matters is to trust the word of Jesus that will surely be fulfilled.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must believe the eternal word rather than calculate dates

Jesus said that just as one knows summer is near when the fig tree and all the trees put out their buds, so when the things He spoke of appear, they should know that the kingdom of God is near.

The fig tree is sometimes understood in the Scriptures in connection with Israel. Seeing the historical restoration of Israel and the various signs Jesus spoke of, the believer must realize that the word of God is being fulfilled. But the signs must not be used to set the date of the second coming or to frighten people. The purpose for which the signs were given is not to satisfy curiosity but to prepare faith.

Heaven and earth may pass away, but the word of Jesus does not pass away. The nations, the institutions, and the religious buildings of the world may fall, but the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection does not change. The promise that He will come again is also surely fulfilled. The faith of the saints must be built not on the changing world and the claims of men but on the word of God that never passes away.

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7. Watch and pray (21:34–38)

"'But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.' And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus says to take heed lest the heart be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life. For the Day of the Son of Man can come unexpectedly.

To be watchful does not mean giving up daily life and only waiting for the end. It means living faithfully the life entrusted to us, conscious of God, without being captured by pleasure and anxiety.

The disciple must always pray that he may bear what is to come and stand before the Son of Man. This is not only a prayer to be spared all suffering, but a prayer to keep the faith in any situation and to be able to stand before God.

Jesus taught in the temple by day and stayed on the Mount of Olives by night. The people came to the temple early in the morning to hear His word. Even as the Cross drew near, Jesus continued to teach people the word of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must guard against dissipation and anxiety and watch in prayer

What makes believers fall in the last days is not only visible persecution. Jesus said to take heed to ourselves lest our hearts be dulled by carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life.

It is necessary to solve responsibly the problem of making a living. But the cares of this life must not rule the heart and make us forget the gospel and the kingdom of God. If we live only for the pleasures and the material things of the world, the heart that should hear the word of the Lord grows dull, and we fail to prepare for the Lord who is coming again.

To watch and pray always does not mean staying awake without sleep or constantly investigating the rumors of the world. It means setting the heart on the word of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit, seeking the help of the Holy Spirit, and serving the gospel and souls in union with the church.

Jesus taught the word in the temple by day, and the people came from early morning to hear that word. The most important attitude in preparing for the last days is not chasing the rumors of the world but continuing to hear the word of the Lord and keeping the faith.

Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 21 conveys

Luke chapter 21 does not teach the saints to calculate the date of the end. It says that though the visible temple and the world pass away, the word of God is eternal; therefore do not be deceived, do not fear, and testify to the gospel.

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Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with the baptism He received from John. And He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and rose from the dead, conquering sin and death. The person who knows this gospel of the water and the Spirit and believes it in his heart receives the remission of sin and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The person who has received the remission of sin must testify to the gospel even in tribulation, relying on the Holy Spirit. He must not fall into terror at the signs of the world, but know that redemption is near and lift up his head. He must take heed to himself lest his heart be dulled by carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and stay awake with the word and prayer.

Even if the Lord were to come tomorrow, what we must do today is clear. It is to preach the word of the remission of sin to the souls who do not yet know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and to wait in faith for Jesus who is coming again. ✉

Part 2. An expository sermon
following the text passage by passage

Believe the word and wait watchfully for the second coming

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 we examined each passage of Luke chapter 21 side by side through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at the faith of the poor widow, the prophecy of the destruction of the temple, the life that testifies to the gospel under persecution, and the faith that waits watchfully for the Lord who is coming again.

The two mites of the poor widow, the word that the temple will be thrown down, the persecution the disciples will receive and the fall of Jerusalem, the parable of the fig tree, and the command to watch and pray are not words separated from one another. All these words show that though the things of the world pass away, the word of the Lord is surely fulfilled, and that the saved saints must serve the gospel in every circumstance and wait in faith for Jesus who will come again.

The expository sermons that follow trace the flow of the text and examine how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took upon Himself the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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God who receives the faith of the poor widow

"And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, and He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, 'Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all; for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.'" (Luke 21:1–4).

"This poor widow has put in more than all"

Jesus had just rebuked the scribes who love long robes and high places and devour widows' houses. Then, as He watched the people putting their offerings into the treasury of the temple, He saw a poor widow putting in two mites. The greed of the scribes who devoured widows' property and the faith of the widow who gave God all her livelihood stand in sharp contrast. In people's eyes the rich who put in much money looked great, but in the eyes of Jesus the faith of the poor widow, whom no one noticed, looked great.

Two mites were a very small amount. That money did not look large enough to meet the many needs of the temple, nor was it an offering to boast of before people. But Jesus declared that this widow had put in more than all. For the standard by which God receives an offering is different from the amount man calculates.

"She out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had"

The rich gave a part of their abundance as offerings, but the widow gave God all the livelihood she had out of her poverty. God did not look only at the amount that appeared outwardly; He looked at what she believed and with what heart she gave. He made it known that the faith of the widow, who entrusted her whole life to God, was greater than the offerings of those who gave out of abundance.

That the widow gave all her livelihood means that she entrusted her living and her future to God. She did not try to live clutching her little money; she believed that God is the One who looks after her life and her needs. In the two mites were love and gratitude toward God, reliance and devotion. Jesus saw that heart within, which people could not see, and acknowledged that she had given more than all.

This word shows that God does not judge according to man's outward appearance and the world's measure of size. People highly value great riches and conspicuous achievements, but God receives as precious a small thing given in faith. Even the person who has little, not regarding himself as insignificant, can serve the gospel and souls with what God has entrusted to him. God remembers devotion given in faith and repays that labor with grace.

Serving the gospel is the most righteous work

An offering is not a price that buys the remission of sin or the blessing of God. However much wealth a person offers, he cannot wash away his own sins. A sinner receives the remission

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of all his sins freely by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished. Offerings and service are not conditions for obtaining salvation but the fruit of faith that the saved person shows in gratitude for the grace of God.

Jesus gave Himself wholly for sinners before this widow gave. He had already taken upon Himself all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River; bearing those sins He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, receiving all the judgment of sin; and He rose from the dead and accomplished perfect salvation. Before we give anything to God, God first gave His own Son, and Jesus gave His own body and life to save us from all sins.

The person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows that his body, time, talents, and material things were all given by the grace of God. So he does not give as if being robbed under compulsion, but gives gladly out of love for the Lord who saved him. Whether he has much or little, he preaches the gospel, builds up the church, and cares for saints in hardship and for his neighbors with the portion God has entrusted to him. God looks at the faith and love that appear within each person's circumstances.

The church and the workers of the gospel must manage with fear the offerings the saints have given in faith. Even the two mites of a poor widow are wealth offered to God, so they can never be used for the honor and luxury of leaders. Offerings must be used honestly for preaching the gospel, saving souls, serving the church, and caring for people in hardship. The leader is a steward who protects the faith and the livelihood of weak saints and faithfully manages the offerings they have given willingly.

The faith of the poor widow teaches that the faith of the saints

does not stay in words but appears in actual life. The person who has received the remission of all his sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit remembers the grace of Jesus who first gave Himself, and offers in faith the body, the time, and the material things God has entrusted to him for the gospel and for souls. God remembers all that labor and devotion and repays it with an eternal reward.

Though the temple falls, the word is eternal

"Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 'These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.' So they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?' And He said: 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am He," and, "The time has drawn near." Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.'" (Luke 21:5–9).

"Not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down"

Some people pointed to the temple and spoke of how it was adorned with beautiful stones and the donations people had offered. The temple of Jerusalem was great and magnificent, a building that gave the people of Israel religious pride. To

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people's eyes such a solid temple looked as if it would never fall.

But Jesus said that the temple they admired would be thrown down with not one stone left upon another. Jesus did not look only at the outward beauty of the building; He saw the unbelief and hypocrisy of the religious leaders who worked around that temple, and the judgment that would come upon Jerusalem for rejecting the Son of God. Even a temple God has given cannot hold back judgment if people reject Christ and make it an object of religious boasting.

This word was actually fulfilled in history when the Roman army later besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. Even the temple people relied on as if it could never fall was thrown down exactly as Jesus had said. Visible buildings disappear, but the word the Lord has spoken is surely fulfilled. The fall of the temple clearly testifies that we must believe the written word of God.

The temple was the place where God met sinners and showed the way of atonement. The blood of sacrificial offerings was shed there, but the true substance of the salvation to which the temple and its sacrifices pointed is Jesus Christ. To boast only of the temple building while rejecting Jesus, the true owner of the temple, was to cast away the substance of salvation and cling to the outward form.

At the time of this text, Jesus had already taken upon His own body all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. He was walking the way to bear those sins, to be nailed to the Cross, to shed His blood and die, and to rise from the dead and complete eternal salvation. The temple built of stone and its repeated sacrifices pass away, but the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection is eternal. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit

in his heart receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes the temple of God.

"Take heed that you not be deceived"

The disciples asked when the temple would be thrown down and what sign there would be when it was about to take place. But Jesus did not first tell them the date; He said, *"Take heed that you not be deceived."* For the saints who wait for the last days, the most important thing is not calculating the time but believing the written word and keeping the true gospel.

Jesus warned that many would come in His name saying, *"I am He"* and, *"The time has drawn near."* In the last days there appear those who deceive by using people's anxiety and their curiosity about the end. The believer does not follow them, but believes the written word that Jesus, who is God, took upon Himself the sins of mankind with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in the saints who have received the remission of sin, leads them to believe this word and stand firm in the true gospel.

"The end will not come immediately"

Jesus said not to be terrified even when we hear of wars and commotions. These things must come to pass first, but the end does not come immediately. This word tells us that time remains to preach the gospel until the hour the Lord has appointed. The believer does not merely look for a place to hide or fall into fear when the world is shaken; until the day the Lord comes again, he faithfully conveys the news of salvation, that all sins have

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been washed away by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The church also does not make the size of its buildings, its property, its long history, and the number of its people the ground of its faith. Visible organizations and buildings can fall, but the gospel Jesus completed and the word of God are eternal. That the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached exactly, and that people believe it and receive the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit, is the most important work entrusted to the church.

Luke chapter 21 verses 5–9 teach that though the visible glory of the world falls, the word of Jesus is surely fulfilled. The saints are not deceived by false christs and rash claims about the end, and they are not terrified by rumors of wars and tumults. Believing the eternal salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, they hold the written word and faithfully preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the day the Lord comes again.

God who turns persecution into an opportunity to testify to the gospel

"Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will

answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:10–19).

Jesus said that nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, that there would be great earthquakes, famines, and pestilences in various places, and that fearful sights and great signs from heaven would appear. As the history of the world moves toward its end, the order men have built is shaken and great disasters come upon the created world as well. But all these things are what God has foretold in the written word, and they do not happen outside the reign of God.

Jesus said that before these great disasters appeared, the disciples would first be persecuted because of His name. They would be delivered to synagogues and prisons and dragged before kings and rulers. In fact, the apostles and saints of the early church were arrested, tried, and imprisoned for preaching Jesus. Until the day the Lord comes again, those who preach the true gospel meet the opposition of the world and of false religion.

The world hates the name of Jesus, and therefore it also hates the gospel of salvation He accomplished. The gospel of the water and the Spirit exposes man's sin and his own righteousness and proclaims that one is saved only by the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ accomplished. Because this word shakes religious pride that clings to its own righteousness and the powers of the world, opposition and persecution arise against those who believe and preach the gospel.

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"It will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony"

But Jesus said that the persecution would *"turn out for you as an occasion for testimony."* The very act of making the saints stand before kings and rulers to silence them becomes an opportunity to testify to Jesus Christ before them. Through those trials, men of power and many people who would not ordinarily listen to the gospel come to hear of the salvation of God. God turns even the persecution of the enemy into a door for preaching the gospel.

What the saints must testify to is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. At the time of this text, Jesus had already taken upon His own body all the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. He was now walking the way to bear those sins, to be nailed to the Cross, to shed His blood and die under the judgment of sin, and to rise from the dead and complete salvation.

Today the believer preaches the gospel completed by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, and testifies that the person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God.

"I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist"

Jesus told the disciples to settle it in their hearts not to prepare their defense beforehand. It is the word to trust the Lord rather than fearing what to say in the day of persecution and relying only on human wisdom. Jesus promised that He Himself would give them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries

would not be able to contradict or resist.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sin. The Holy Spirit brings the written word to remembrance, enables us to testify boldly to the truth, and gives the strength and the wisdom to endure suffering. The power that overcomes persecution lies not in a man's eloquence or strong will but in the Holy Spirit who works within the saints.

Jesus said that even parents and brothers, relatives and friends would betray the saints and put some of them to death. To be rejected by those closest to us brings deep pain of heart along with physical suffering. But even if family and friends oppose us and the powers of the world kill the body, the salvation Jesus accomplished does not change, and the Lord never abandons the saints who suffer for His name.

As Jesus was first hated by the world, believers are also hated because of His name. But we must not change the gospel to gain people's recognition and safety; we must keep to the end the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

"By your patience possess your souls"

After saying that some would be put to death, Jesus promised, *"Not a hair of your head shall be lost."* The persecutor can harm and kill the body of a saint, but he cannot take away the eternal life and the salvation God has given. The life of the believer is safely preserved in God, and the Lord will raise the saints who have died and give them imperishable bodies and the eternal kingdom. The protection of God is a complete protection that conquers even the death of the body and leads the saints to resurrection and glory.

The word *"By your patience possess your souls"* means to

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endure in faith and receive the life and the kingdom the Lord has promised. The patience of the believer is not a merit that obtains the remission of sin and salvation by his own strength. It is the person who has already received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit holding the written word and keeping the faith to the end. The Holy Spirit holds the heart of the saints and gives strength to endure suffering, bringing them to the kingdom the Lord has promised.

At the end of such patience are the resurrection, the Millennial Kingdom, and the eternal kingdom that God has promised. When the Lord comes again, those who have received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit will rise and reign with Christ for a thousand years and enter the eternal kingdom of God. Therefore, neither persecution nor death can cut off the hope of the saints.

The believer living in the last days is not seized in advance by fear as he imagines the persecution to come. He believes the promise that Jesus gives the necessary words and wisdom and that the Holy Spirit gives strength to endure. What we must do now is to establish the gospel of the water and the Spirit firmly in our hearts, learn the written word, and preach the gospel of the remission of sin to the whole world in union with the church.

Therefore, even amid wars, disasters, and persecution, the preaching of the gospel does not stop. With the mouth and the wisdom the Lord gives, the saints testify to the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, and by the help of the Holy Spirit they keep the faith to the end, looking to the eternal kingdom of God.

The judgment of Jerusalem and the hope of the second coming

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 'And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.'" (Luke 21:20–28).

Jesus said that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they should know that its desolation was near. He was telling them concretely how the prophecy that not one stone of the temple would be left upon another would be fulfilled in history. The fall of Jerusalem was not a vague symbol but a judgment that was actually coming.

At that time those in Judea were to flee to the mountains, those inside the city were to go out, and those in the country were not to enter the besieged city. When the army approached, the inside of the walls looked safe, but at that time Jerusalem itself

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would become the very place where judgment fell. Rather than relying on visible walls and the temple, believing and obeying the word Jesus had given in advance was the way to preserve life.

"These are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled"

Jesus called that day the days of vengeance, *"That all things which are written may be fulfilled."* God had warned again and again through the prophets and the word, and had opened the way of salvation by sending Christ, but Jerusalem did not know the day of its visitation and rejected the Son of God. Upon that unbelief and obstinacy the historical judgment of God came.

The word that woe will come to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies shows how terrible the war and the siege would be in reality. Those who could not flee quickly and those caring for young lives would go through great distress. Jesus did not delight in the judgment; He wept as He looked at Jerusalem and warned in advance of the suffering they would undergo.

This prophecy was fulfilled in history in the first century when the Roman army besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the temple. People fell by the edge of the sword and were led away captive, and Jerusalem was placed under Gentile power. This judgment was the historical judgment on the unbelief of Jerusalem of that age and its rejection of Christ, and today it stands as a solemn warning to everyone who refuses the time of salvation God has given.

The word that *"Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"* shows that Jerusalem and

the history of the world are under the reign of God. Even the period in which Jerusalem lies under Gentile power has a limit God has set, and when that appointed time is fulfilled, the words about the end of the world and the coming of the Son of Man will also surely be fulfilled. History does not drift according to man's will; it moves toward its end according to the word God has written.

"They will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory"

From verse 25 the word of Jesus moves from the historical fall of Jerusalem to the cosmic signs that will appear at the end of the world and the coming of the Son of Man. There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars; the sea and the waves will roar; and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. The nations of the whole world will fall into confusion and distress as they see the nature and the order of the world they relied on being shaken, and they will become afraid as they think of what is coming upon the earth.

But at the climax of all these things stands Jesus Christ, coming again. Jesus said that *"they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."* The second coming of the Lord is an actual event revealed before all people with power and glory. Jesus, who at His first coming humbled Himself, put on the body of a man, and was rejected by sinners, will appear at His second coming as the King of kings and the Judge.

At the time He spoke this word, Jesus had already taken upon His own body all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. He was now fulfilling the

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way to bear those sins and die on the Cross, shedding His blood under the judgment of sin, to rise from the dead on the third day, and to ascend and prepare His second coming. The first coming of Jesus, His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection are His work to save sinners; His second coming is the event in which He reveals the completed salvation gloriously to His people.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with His baptism, received all their punishment on the Cross, and rose again—receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. Therefore, the saved person waits for the day of the second coming not as the terror of judgment but as the day when salvation is completed.

"Look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near"

Jesus told His disciples that when the final signs begin to appear, they should "*look up and lift up your heads.*" The people of the world are seized with fear as they see the powers of the heavens shaken, but the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit lift up their heads in hope, looking to the Lord who is coming again. Just as the word about the fall of Jerusalem was fulfilled exactly in history, the promise about the coming of the Son of Man and the redemption of the saints will also surely be fulfilled.

The word "*your redemption draws near*" means that the day is near when the saints who have already received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit will receive complete salvation even in their bodies. The saint was saved from all sins the moment he believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but he still lives

in the world in a weak and mortal body. When the Lord comes again, the righteous who sleep in Christ will rise again, and the saints who are alive will also be changed into imperishable, glorious bodies and meet the Lord.

The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee that the bodies of the saints will also surely rise again. The righteous who have received the remission of sin will participate with the returning Lord in the glory of the Millennial Kingdom and enjoy the eternal kingdom of God in the new heavens and the new earth. Therefore, the end of the world is, for the saints, the day they receive completely the life and the kingdom God has promised.

Believing the words about the end, the saints faithfully carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them at home and at work, do not let their hearts be taken by dissipation and the cares of this life, and live awake, holding the written word. Above all, until the day the Lord comes again, they faithfully preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, to the souls who have not yet heard it.

Therefore, the judgment of God and the coming of the Son of Man are surely fulfilled, and the redemption of the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is also surely completed. The saved lift up their heads when the world is shaken, and wait in hope for Jesus, who will give them the resurrection, the Millennial Kingdom, and the eternal kingdom.

The eternal word, though heaven and earth pass away

"Then He spoke to them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know

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for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:29–33).

After speaking of the fall of Jerusalem and the times of the Gentiles, the signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory, Jesus told the parable of the fig tree and all the trees. The tribulation and the signs He had spoken of are not words meant to drive the saints to despair. Jesus said that when these things begin to happen, redemption is near, so lift up your heads; and then He taught them to know that the kingdom of God is near.

"Know that the kingdom of God is near"

When we see buds coming out on a tree, we know that summer is near even if no one explains it. When new shoots sprout on branches that looked withered through the winter, we can tell that the season is changing. In the same way, when we see the things God foretold appearing in history, we must know that the second coming of Jesus and the kingdom of God have drawn near. The signs are not rumors that shut people in vague terror; they are markers showing that the written word is being fulfilled.

The fig tree refers to Israel. The history in which Israel, which had lost its nation and been scattered among the peoples, was restored and became a nation again is like the fig tree putting out its branches and buds, and it is an important sign that the second coming of the Lord is near. Seeing the restoration of

Israel, the believer believes that history does not move by chance but goes forward toward its end according to the plan God has spoken.

Luke records that we should look at the fig tree and *"all the trees."* This makes us watch, together with the restoration of Israel, the shaking of peoples and nations, wars and disasters, and the various signs appearing throughout the whole world. Just as summer becomes evident when every tree buds, the more the things the Lord spoke of appear in many directions, the more clearly we can know that the kingdom of God and the coming of the Son of Man are near.

Jesus said, *"This generation will by no means pass away till all things take place."* As the fig tree puts out its buds, within the generation in which the restoration of Israel and the signs the Lord spoke of appear in earnest, the words about the end are also fulfilled. This word makes us discern the times and prepare the faith to meet the returning Lord. The born-again do not fall into fear at the signs but believe the written word and live awake.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"

The word *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"* guarantees every prophecy. Even heaven and earth, which man considers most solid, pass away, but not one word the Son of God has spoken is annulled. Just as the words about the fall of Jerusalem and the temple were fulfilled exactly in history, the words about the coming of the Son of Man and the kingdom of God will also surely be fulfilled.

At the time He spoke this word, Jesus had already taken upon His own body all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from

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John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Now the time was drawing near for Him to bear those sins and die on the Cross, shedding His blood under the judgment of sin, to rise again on the third day and conquer sin and death, and to ascend. Jesus fulfilled the death of the Cross, the resurrection, and the ascension exactly as He had said. Therefore, the word that He will come again is also surely fulfilled.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel of salvation in which the word of God was actually fulfilled in history. Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins in our place with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose from the dead to complete salvation. The person who believes this gospel in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes one of the people of God.

The baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, already fulfilled, are the guarantee that the promises still remaining—His second coming and the kingdom of God—will also surely be fulfilled. Therefore, even when the world is shaken, the saved person holds more firmly to the word that does not change though heaven and earth pass away, rather than to his own feelings and circumstances.

The second coming of the Lord is the day of judgment for the person who has not received the remission of sin, but for the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit it is the day of hope when redemption is completed. The believer now lives under the reign of Jesus the King, having received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit; and when the Lord comes again, the kingdom of God is fully revealed in power and glory. The saints who sleep in Christ will rise, and the saints who are alive will also be changed into imperishable bodies and enjoy

the eternal kingdom with the Lord.

Therefore, the person who waits for the second coming does not abandon the responsibilities of the present. He faithfully carries out the work entrusted to him at home and at work, does not let his heart be taken by dissipation and the cares of this life, and serves the gospel in union with the church. He preaches to the souls who have not yet received the remission of sin the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, and prepares in faith for the day the Lord comes again.

Therefore, the saints who have received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe the eternal word rather than the shaking world, and live hoping for Jesus Christ who will come again and for the kingdom of God that will be completed.

Watch and pray, and prepare for the second coming

"'But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.' And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him" (Luke 21:34–38).

After telling them to know that the kingdom of God is near when they see the buds of the fig tree and all the trees, Jesus told

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His disciples how those living in the last days must prepare. Preparation does not end with knowing the signs of the second coming and discerning the times. The believer must examine his own heart and always watch and pray.

"Take heed to yourselves"

Jesus first said, *"Take heed to yourselves."* The harder the circumstances of the world become, the easier it is for people to pay attention only to outside events and the signs of the end; but the Lord says first to examine what our own hearts are clinging to. If the heart grows dull, the word of God is not heard, and even while seeing the signs of the second coming one fails to prepare the faith to meet the Lord.

What dulls the heart is carousing and drunkenness. If we give our hearts over to the pleasures of the flesh and the enjoyment of the world, the soul falls asleep and the hope of the kingdom of God also grows dim. Since the desires of the flesh and old habits appear even in the saints who have received the remission of sin, we must guard our hearts with the word of God, receive the guidance of the church that preaches the word rightly, and live following the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said that not only carousing and drunkenness but also the cares of this life dull the heart. Food, clothing, and shelter are necessary for everyone, but if that anxiety completely captures the heart, a person comes to live only for his own survival. He keeps postponing the work of preaching the gospel and serving souls, and he also loses the faith that looks to the second coming of the Lord and the kingdom of God.

In the last days especially, believers must not exhaust all their strength only for their own families and their own living,

but must unite with the church. Within the church we should look after one another's circumstances and the needs of daily life, and use the work and the material things God has given together for the preaching of the gospel. When the saints unite in faith and serve one another, they are not caught by the cares of this life and can continue the work of the gospel to the end of the world.

The Day of the Lord comes upon *"all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth."* No one can escape the authority of that day, and the second coming is not delayed because people are absorbed in the affairs of the world. To the person whose heart has been taken by the world, that day comes unexpectedly like a snare; but the person who believes the written word and stays awake meets the returning Lord, looking to the completion of redemption.

"Watch therefore, and pray always"

Jesus said, *"Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."* The believer does not think that he can overcome the final tribulation and testing by his own strength; he seeks the protection of the Lord and the help of the Holy Spirit. He prays believing that God will keep his faith, enable him to preach the gospel boldly, and bring him through every trial to stand before the Son of Man.

The qualification to stand before the Son of Man does not come from the merit of long prayers or good deeds. The person who has received the remission of all his sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished stands before the Lord in the strength of

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the righteousness of God. Prayer and a watchful life are not paying the price of salvation; they are the fruit of faith in which the saint, already saved by grace, lives preparing for the second coming.

At the time He spoke this word, Jesus had already taken upon His own body all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. He was now about to bear those sins and die on the Cross, shedding His blood under the judgment of sin, and to rise from the dead on the third day and complete salvation.

Today we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by the baptism of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes a child of God.

Even in the born-again saints, the weakness of the flesh and old desires keep appearing. When he does wrong and his heart leans toward the world, the saint takes hold again of the fact that Jesus took upon Himself with His baptism even his weaknesses and the sins he will yet commit, and that they were already judged on the Cross. Believing his identity as one completely washed, he strengthens his conscience and renews his heart, and following the word and the guidance of the church, he walks the way of the gospel again.

To watch and pray always does not mean not sleeping physically; it means setting the heart on God and receiving the guidance of the word and the Holy Spirit. The person who knows that he cannot bear the last days by his own strength, who seeks the help of the Lord, who remembers the gospel of the water and the Spirit daily, and who serves the work of the gospel together with the church—he is the one who is spiritually awake.

"Early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him"

Verses 37 and 38 record that Jesus taught in the temple by day and rested on the mountain called Olivet by night, and that all the people came to the temple early in the morning to hear His word. The sight of Jesus teaching the word of salvation even with the Cross before Him, and of the people coming early in the morning to hear the word, shows that watchful faith appears as a life that longs for, hears, and learns the word of God.

The believer must keep close to the word and treasure the gatherings and the teaching of the church. He must not judge the times by his own thoughts alone, but hear the written word, set his faith right, and pray together with his brothers and sisters. When we keep hearing and believing the word of the gospel, carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life cannot rule the heart, and the hope that looks to the returning Lord stands firm.

Therefore, the saints who have received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not let their hearts be taken by carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life; they watch always in prayer within the word and the church, serving the gospel and preparing for the day they will stand before the Lord who is coming again. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 21

[Question] 1. In Luke chapter 21 verses 10–11, what are the continuing signs of the end that Jesus spoke of?

As the continuing signs of the end, Jesus spoke of wars between nations and kingdoms, great earthquakes, famines, and pestilences in various places, and fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

"Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven" (Luke 21:10–11).

These signs show that the world fallen in sin is not eternal and is moving toward the judgment of God and the second coming of Jesus. Wars and disasters existed before as well, but as the last days draw near, worldwide confusion and fear grow, and people become so afraid, thinking of what is coming upon the world, that their hearts fail them.

But Jesus said not to be terrified when we hear of wars and commotions. For these things must come to pass first, but the end does not come immediately. The saints must not be discouraged at the changes of the world or follow those who deceive; they must believe that the written word is being fulfilled and look to Jesus.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross,

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and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. To the person who has already received the remission of sin by believing this gospel, the end does not mean only destruction. It is the hope that the day is drawing near when the Lord will come again and give the saved saints the Millennial Kingdom He promised and the eternal kingdom of the new heavens and the new earth. Therefore, we must live faithfully the life entrusted to us and preach the gospel until the day the Lord comes.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 21 verse 12, what does He say will happen before these signs of the end appear?

Jesus said that before the signs such as wars, earthquakes, and famines appear, the disciples would be seized and persecuted because of His name. People would deliver them to synagogues and prisons and drag them before kings and rulers.

"Before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake" (Luke 21:12).

This word shows that those who believe the gospel are not promised a life without hardship before the world ends. The world that rejects the gospel hates those who follow Jesus, just as it hated Him. At times religious power and political power together press upon the saints, and even those close to them may oppose their faith.

But persecution is not evidence that the gospel has failed. Jesus said that it would rather become a testimony, and He promised that the disciples need not worry beforehand about the

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words and the wisdom with which to answer. The Holy Spirit holds their hearts and gives the necessary words and boldness so that they testify to the salvation Jesus accomplished. The gospel they are to testify to is the news of salvation that Jesus completed by receiving baptism from John and taking upon Himself the sin of the world, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead.

Therefore, the saints must not hide the gospel or compromise with the world because suffering comes. Not relying on their own strength alone, they must seek the wisdom and the power the Lord gives, keep the faith in every circumstance, and preach the gospel.

[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 21 verses 13–15, what meaning does He say there is in the persecution the disciples receive?

The persecution the disciples receive becomes an opportunity to testify to Jesus and the salvation He accomplished. The enemies seize the disciples and make them stand before kings and rulers, but in that very place they come to preach the truth to people who ordinarily had no opportunity to hear the gospel.

"But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist" (Luke 21:13–15).

Jesus told the disciples not to meditate beforehand on how to answer. This does not mean to make no preparation at all; it means not to rely only on one's own eloquence in the moment of crisis. The Lord gives a mouth and wisdom which all the

adversaries cannot contradict or resist, and the Holy Spirit governs the thoughts and the words of the believer.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself sin, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and saved sinners by rising from the dead. The center of what the disciples must testify to is this very gospel of the water and the Spirit. Believing and boldly preaching this gospel even under persecution becomes a testimony given not only with words but with life.

Therefore, when we meet suffering, rather than asking only why this has happened, we must look to see to whom we can preach the gospel in that place. Speaking truthfully in reliance on the Lord and keeping the faith to the end is the way to turn persecution into an opportunity for testimony.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 21 verses 16–17, what sufferings does He say the disciples will undergo because of the name of Jesus?

Because of the name of Jesus, the disciples will be betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends; some of them will be put to death; and they will be hated by all.

"You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake" (Luke 21:16–17).

This suffering is the more painful because it comes not only from distant enemies but also within the closest relationships. Family and relatives who do not believe the gospel do not understand the faith of the saints, and at times they may press them to deny Jesus, even threatening the relationship and life itself.

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The word that they *"will be hated by all"* means, rather than a numerical claim that every single person hates them, that they will be hated because of the gospel in the many levels and relationships of the world. This is suffering the saints receive not because they have done wrong but because they hold the name of Jesus and the truth.

Therefore, even before the opposition of those close to them, the saints must not answer hatred with hatred but keep the faith. Loving their families, they must yet put the word of Jesus before human recognition and peace, and preach the gospel and do good even to those who hate them.

[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 21 verses 18–19, with what words did Jesus comfort the disciples who suffer?

Jesus comforted the suffering disciples with the words that not a hair of their head would be lost, and that by their patience they would possess their souls.

"Not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:18–19).

Since the previous verse said that some of the disciples would be put to death, the word that not a hair will be lost does not mean that the body always escapes danger. It is the promise that God knows and keeps completely the life and the salvation of the saints, and that no persecutor can go beyond the bounds God has allowed and take away the eternal life of the believer.

The word *"By your patience possess your souls"* does not mean buying salvation with the merit of endurance. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself sin, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation

by rising from the dead. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in the saints who believe this gospel, holds their faith even in fear and gives strength to endure to the end.

Therefore, patience is not enduring pain without feeling; it is the continuation of faith that believes the promise of the Lord and does not abandon the gospel to the end. Even before the threat of death, the saints must be faithful, looking to the Lord who keeps their souls and will let them participate in the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal kingdom to come.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 21 verses 20–21, how does He speak of the time when the fall of Jerusalem is near and of what will happen then?

Jesus said that when they saw Jerusalem surrounded by armies, they should know that its desolation was near. At that time those in Judea were to flee to the mountains, those inside the city were to go out, and those in the country were not to enter the city.

"When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her" (Luke 21:20–21).

This word means that the time when the enemy army besieges Jerusalem becomes the clear sign of its destruction. Rather than gathering inside the city believing that the walls and the temple would protect them, they had to remember the warning of Jesus and flee quickly. Fleeing was not a lack of faith; it was an act of obedience to the specific word the Lord had given.

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This prophecy was fulfilled in history when the Roman army besieged Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and destroyed the city and the temple. The temple people boasted of was destroyed until not one stone was left upon another, and many people were killed or taken captive.

The fall of Jerusalem shows that the institutions and buildings men have made are not safer than the word of God. The saints must not rely on visible power, but believe and obey the warning of the Lord and continue the work of the gospel entrusted to them even in the last days.

[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 21 verse 22, what kind of days did Jesus say the days of Jerusalem's fall would be?

Jesus called the days when Jerusalem falls *"the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."*

"These are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22).

That day was not merely an accidental political defeat; it was the day of judgment in which the word God had warned through the prophets was fulfilled in history. The people of Israel repeatedly rejected the word of God, and finally they rejected even Jesus, the Son whom God sent.

God was longsuffering and gave opportunities to turn back, but He did not leave unpunished the sin of defying the word to the end. Therefore, the fall of Jerusalem shows that the word of God is surely fulfilled and that judgment follows sin and unbelief.

We who hear this warning must not take lightly the longsuffering of God. We must believe the salvation Jesus

accomplished, humble our hearts before the word, and convey the news of salvation to those who do not yet know the gospel, before the judgment.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 21 verses 23–24, how is the calamity the people of Israel will suffer described?

The calamity the people of Israel will suffer is described as a disaster so urgent and terrible that there is special woe for pregnant women and nursing mothers. There will be great distress in the land and wrath upon the people; many will be killed by the edge of the sword or led away captive into all nations.

"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:23–24).

Pregnant women and mothers caring for little children cannot flee quickly, so they suffer the pain of siege and war all the more. Jerusalem is trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, and the people lose their nation and are scattered among many peoples.

This word was actually fulfilled through the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the death and captivity of the Jews. The fact that Israel, so long scattered, later formed a nation again and revived is also an important marker announcing the last days. The words of judgment and restoration God has prophesied are fulfilled in history.

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Therefore, the saints must not think themselves safe merely because of outward conditions such as nation or temple, but must believe the word of God and the salvation Jesus accomplished. And before the judgment comes, they must faithfully preach so that even one more person may hear and believe the gospel.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 21 verses 25–26, what confusion does He say the world will go through when the end comes?

When the end comes, signs appear in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth the nations fall into confusion because of the roaring of the sea and the waves. People faint from fear as they think of what is coming upon the world, and the powers of the heavens are shaken.

"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Luke 21:25–26).

This confusion reveals that human wisdom, technology, and power cannot keep the world safe forever. When the order people relied on is shaken and fear grows between nature and the nations, the world finds no way to solve its problems by itself.

But to the saints these signs are not only a reason for despair. For after them the Son of Man comes in a cloud with power and great glory, and the day draws near when the saints who have already received the remission of sin receive the Millennial Kingdom the Lord promised and the eternal kingdom of the new heavens and the new earth. To save sinners, Jesus received

baptism from John and took upon Himself our sin, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

Therefore, we must not let our hearts be taken by the confusion of the world, but lift up our heads and look to Jesus who is coming again. Instead of hiding in fear, we must keep the faith and be faithful in preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the Lord comes.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 21 verses 29–30, what parable did Jesus give so that we may recognize the signs of the end?

So that we may recognize the signs of the end, Jesus spoke the parable of the fig tree and all the trees. Just as we see the buds and leaves come out on the trees and know for ourselves that summer is near, when we see the things He spoke of happening, we must know that the kingdom of God is near.

"Then He spoke to them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:29–31).

The fig tree refers especially to Israel. The sight of Israel, which had long lost its nation and been scattered, forming a nation again and flourishing is a sign announcing that the last days and the second coming of Jesus are drawing near. *"All the trees"* makes us watch, together with Israel, the various changes appearing among the nations of the world.

The buds of a tree clearly announce that the season is changing, but they do not tell the exact date. The purpose of this parable is not to make us calculate dates but to make us believe

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the written word, discern the times, and prepare.

Therefore, seeing the signs of the end, the saints must not set their hope on the world but wait for Jesus who is coming again. We must awaken our hearts, devote ourselves to preaching the gospel, and prepare the faith with which to meet the Lord.

[Question] 11. In Luke chapter 21 verse 31, what do the various signs of the end tell us has drawn near?

The various signs of the end tell us that the kingdom of God has drawn near. This means that the time is near when Jesus will come again with power and great glory, judge the powers that oppose Him, and establish the kingdom He promised for His saved people.

"So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:31).

The kingdom of God already came to this earth together with the gospel when Jesus came the first time. But at the last, Jesus comes again, raises the saints who have died, changes the saints who are alive, establishes the Millennial Kingdom on this earth, and finally leads them into the eternal kingdom.

The way to enter that kingdom lies not in knowing much about the changes of the world but in believing the salvation Jesus completed. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead.

Therefore, rather than being pressed down by terror at the signs, the saints must look to the day when the Lord comes again and gives the eternal kingdom He promised. Until that day we

must keep the faith, preach the gospel to those who do not yet know this salvation, and faithfully carry out the work entrusted to us.

[Question] 12. In Luke chapter 21 verse 32, when does He say all these things will be fulfilled?

Jesus said that this generation—the generation that sees the fig tree and all the trees budding and the signs He spoke of appearing—will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

"Then He spoke to them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:29–33).

The age in which Israel, likened to the fig tree, comes back to life and the signs of the end appear all over the world is the time when the second coming of Jesus is near. Here *"this generation"* refers to the generation that sees those signs being fulfilled in earnest, and it carries the meaning that God, who began, accomplishes to the end the things He has spoken.

Jesus said that though heaven and earth pass away, His words will never pass away. Though human expectations and the circumstances of the times change, the prophecies about wars and tribulation, about Israel and Jerusalem, and the words about the coming of the Son of Man and the kingdom of God are surely fulfilled.

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This word is not a call to calculate the date of the second coming but an exhortation to see the word being fulfilled and prepare our faith. The saints must not grow careless, thinking it is still far off, but believe and preach the gospel today and prepare to stand before the Lord.

[Question] 13. In Luke chapter 21 verse 36, what does He teach us to do in order to escape all these things that will come and to stand before the Son of Man?

Jesus taught us to watch always and pray, that we may escape all these things that will come and stand before the Son of Man.

"Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:34–36).

To be watchful is not merely to scan the rumors of the end; it is to guard the heart. Carousing and drunkenness cloud discernment, and the cares of food, clothing, and living hold the heart captive to the affairs of the world. Then, when that Day comes suddenly like a snare, one turns out to be unprepared.

To pray always is not trying to escape tribulation by one's own strength; it is asking the Lord for faith, wisdom, and patience, and remaining in the word. The saints must entrust the needs of daily life to God, serve one another together with the church, and not let go of the work of preaching the gospel even when the circumstances of the world grow hard.

The ground on which we can stand before the Son of Man is not human merit but the salvation Jesus accomplished. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The person who believes this gospel is not one who hides in fear of judgment but one who waits for the Lord who is coming again.

Therefore, we must examine our hearts and our lives and lay down the dissipation and the anxiety that cloud our faith. To believe the written word, to pray always, and to be faithful in preaching the gospel until the day the Lord comes—this is the preparation that overcomes what is to come and stands before the Son of Man. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Let us look at the signs that will appear in the last days, have hope, and be faithful in preaching the gospel

< Luke 21:5-10 >

"Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 'These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.' So they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?' And He said: 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am He," and, "The time has drawn near." Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.' Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom."

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Herod's temple, too, will be thrown down with not one stone left

We have looked at the word up to verse 11: *"There will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."* In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke this content appears in great detail. The disciples asked Jesus what would happen in the last days. They asked Him to tell them the signs of the last days, and the Lord spoke the answer to that in these words.

The people of Israel boasted of their temple, the temple they called Herod's temple. A man named Herod built the house of God very grandly in order to win the hearts of the Jews. It was built for no less than forty-six years (John 2:20). How splendidly, then, must it have been adorned with beautiful stones and donations while it was being built! Beautiful stones means stones that are beautiful. Donations means the many building materials that went into the temple; the people brought things and offered them, as we give offerings today, and with them that temple was built. Since it was built for forty-six years, how magnificently must it have been built! Yet now that temple of God in Israel has all been torn down, and only one wall remains standing like this.

Yet though only one wall remains, the stones are so large that one can hardly tell how great they are. Stones that large were cut and stacked up neatly, the way one lays bricks. So people marvel even when they see it today. In that age there were no cranes and no equipment at all, so people ask by what strength on earth it was ever piled up. In any case, to the people of Israel this temple was their pride. Is there any nation and people, they boasted, that has so fine a temple as we do?—and they boasted like that even

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before Jesus.

But Jesus said, *"These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."* Then the disciples asked, *"Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"* The answer to that continues from verse 8. The word the Lord spoke was not a word for that time only; He spoke even of what will happen at the end of this world.

"Take heed that you not be deceived"

Let us look at the word of verse 8. *"Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them"* If you ask what sign there will be when this world is about to perish, it is that the work of deceiving people arises.

What kind of deception will there be? In this age, people will appear who say that they themselves are Jesus, the Christ. People will appear who pretend to work miracles. There are also those who deceive, saying that the time has now come and the world is at its end, so let us go to a place of refuge. Some buy a distant island, calling it a place of refuge, and go in there; others build houses in every mountain valley and go in there. People in each denomination who claim to have such convictions gather money and are building such refuges in valley after valley. There are many such things.

But this comes from the wrong idea that believers will be raptured before the Great Tribulation comes. That is mistaken. While we live on this earth we will preach the gospel to the full; we will preach the gospel until the day the Antichrist appears

and kills us, and until then we will make our living and do the work of the gospel. In fact, there is nowhere to flee. In the old days, when war broke out, it was enough to flee Seoul for the countryside, or to run from Chungcheong Province to Gyeongsang Province, but now it is not so. If someone over there presses a single button, missiles fly all the way to Busan. There is nowhere to hide. So however men deceive, saying there is a place of refuge and that whoever goes there will live, the Lord says plainly here, *"Do not go after them."*

We are not people who would ask to be let into such a refuge, and we have no desire to go. Rather, when men say the time is near and the world is shaken with commotion and turmoil, we preach the gospel. They say that even in our country there are now three million people who have come in from abroad and live here. Some farm and some work in factories, and we can preach the gospel to such people as well. We are handing out our collected editions like this. Some days we hand out many, and ways are opened to many places, and we pass them on.

And as we do so, I pray. People may receive the books and read them without much thought, but I pray before the Lord that when they read, they will understand and realize what is in them. I ask that the Holy Spirit work in their hearts so that they understand the content of the books, and realize and believe the fact that Jesus took charge of all their sins and carried them away with the baptism He received from John and with the Cross. Whenever we all pray, we ought to pray that He give them realization and faith.

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As artificial intelligence advances, the world grows turbulent

When the time of the Lord's coming draws near, He says, *"When you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified."* He said, *"These things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately."* And I suspect that this turmoil and these commotions may come about not so much from war as from artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence has now entered too deeply into our daily lives. In the logistics warehouses there are almost no people; robots and systems pack the goods and send them out; give a command by voice, and it plays music, turns the lights on and off, and does all kinds of things in our place.

Such technology keeps developing, and developing again. Then man comes more and more under the rule of that system and lives adjusted to it. Artificial intelligence keeps advancing on its own and begins to rule over man. What is more, they say that by manipulating human genes, the sickly parts can be cut out and replaced with healthy ones, so that people can be made to live one or two hundred years without disease. But to enjoy such benefits, much money is needed. In the end a great gap begins to open between people. The one who enjoys the benefit lives long and even his diseases disappear, while the one who cannot is left out—such a world, they say, is coming.

When artificial intelligence advances like this, the world falls into great confusion. We must not think only of the good side. When the development of artificial intelligence proceeds, it comes to one step short of the appearing of the Antichrist, and when the Antichrist appears, the world becomes a single unified state. When it becomes a single state, the time of the Lord's coming is at hand. At that time the powers that oppose God rise up, and at the same time those who believe in God are persecuted,

imprisoned, and killed. After that, Jesus Christ comes in person, deals with the powers that oppose God, and catches His people up from this earth. That is called the Rapture.

The Rapture takes place at the close of this world, after the Antichrist appears and persecutes and kills the righteous; it never takes place before then. Artificial intelligence will become the tool by which the Antichrist rules over people. A chip will be implanted in people's brains, so that when an order is given, it is transmitted to the nerves of the brain and people move according to that command—such a world, they say, is coming. When that happens, mankind falls into utter confusion, and the gap between the classes of men widens. In any case, these are the things that will now stir up commotion and raise turmoil. The turmoil of the last days that the Scriptures speak of is exactly this.

Kingdom will rise against kingdom, and there will be earthquakes, famines, and pestilences

Let us look at verses 10 and 11. *"Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."* When artificial intelligence advances and the world becomes like this, the things this text speaks of will happen.

Nation rises against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and so the whole world truly comes to oppose one another. For example, even if our country and its neighboring countries have gotten along well until now, they fight each other when the economy becomes difficult. Such things, He says, will happen one after another. When the air of war rises, when war breaks

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out and trade goes poorly, what happens? Living becomes hard. And here He said, *"There will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences"*—pestilences means diseases. Earthquakes occur, drought comes so that farming fails and famine follows, and diseases go around—these things, He says, will happen in the days ahead.

Then what must we do in such a time? Will we strive only to live well ourselves somehow? Whether artificial intelligence advances, or the air of war rises among the nations, or earthquakes and famines and pestilences come, we must preach the gospel even then. Until when? We must preach the gospel until the day the Lord comes.

We must preach the gospel until the day the Lord comes

When we preach that gospel, the Lord takes those who have become wheat into His kingdom. Moreover, when the Lord comes to this earth and judges, He can judge only when the other person knew what Jesus did and yet did not believe it; if the person says, "I do not know. I have never even heard of it," how could He judge him? Therefore we must make the gospel known to all people. He said, *"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)*, and He said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20)*. That work is what we must do.

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what else would we do it? These things will surely come. There is no better world ahead. If you ask whether I long for such a world—I do not long for it either. I like what is peaceful and quiet; I do not like noise and war and the turmoil of the world. What I want to say is only this: now or in the days ahead, these things will surely come, so we must keep preaching the gospel just as we do now. Whatever becomes of the world, we must continue the work entrusted to us.

However the world turns, whatever the politics of the nation may be, we do the work of the gospel and strive to make our living as we go. Only one thing is clear: we want to live with freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly—these three freedoms—guaranteed. Everyone should have the freedom to believe what he wants to believe, to say what he wants to say, and to gather when he wants to gather; the freedom for each to do his own business and the work of the gospel must be guaranteed.

The Antichrist, the persecution, and the Rapture that will appear in the last days

In verse 11 He said, *"And there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven."* When this world changes like this and people's hearts become like this, the judgment of God appears in great signs even in the heavens. On this earth it appears in earthquakes and in the ground splitting open, and inside the hearts of men it appears in men growing as vicious as zombies that go mad wanting to devour one another. Even so, what we have to do is preach the gospel. We have only to preach the gospel to the full and stand before the Lord.

Yet that does not mean these things come right away. Do not

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worry. Even if the age of artificial intelligence ripens and artificial intelligence comes to rule man completely, for it to say, "I am God," to oppose God and do as it pleases, time is needed. Even if things proceed as written in the Scriptures, to bring any one thing to pass the laws of the world must be changed and much must be prepared. The Antichrist, too, and the Devil, too, need much time to make their own world. We also need much time to preach the gospel.

So even if such things happen, and however hard our country's politics may become, it does not matter. For we can still serve the gospel. What matters is to preach the gospel until the day the Lord comes; and then, when the last days arrive and the Antichrist appears, what happens after that. You may say, "I hate being caught and killed—I am scared to death," but that will rather turn out for our benefit.

There is no need to be afraid; the Holy Spirit enables us to bear it

It is living now, serving the Lord, that is hard; when that day actually draws near, if you have been born again of water and the Spirit, there is no need to be afraid. He told us not to agonize over what we will say then or whether we will be able to endure the pain. He said that at that time the Lord will give us everything we are to say, and that the time will rather become for us an opportunity to testify to what we believe before the kings of the world and the men in authority.

Even if they kill us, just as it was with the believers of the early Church, though we may tremble with fear at first, at the very moment before we are put to death the Holy Spirit fills us within. Now our thoughts wander here and there with the

thoughts of the flesh or with the impure sermons we hear, but then the Holy Spirit who dwells within governs all our thoughts and heart and conduct, so we can walk that road boldly. So He tells us not to worry about such things.

There is no peace for the world, but peace of heart comes to the one who has met the Lord

Only, when these things happen in the days ahead, do not despair as you look at the world; discern it, thinking, "Ah, these things are drawing near." The peace of the world will disappear. Peace comes into the hearts of those who have met our Lord; there is no peace between nation and nation. There is nothing but fighting between them—trade wars and actual wars.

While we live in such a world, what is the work we must do with our wits about us? We must carry out the literature ministry faithfully. If only we do this faithfully, we can rather suffer less pain. Do the people of the world then suffer no pain? To the people of the world, this world comes to feel like hell. But we are happy. Because we have hope. It is said that of faith, hope, and love, the greatest is love, but in this hard world, hope springs up in us.

What is the name of our church? It is Hope Church. Hope means to look toward the Lord and long for Him. So when the Lord draws near, it is all the better for us. Only, what worries me for the flesh is this: it would be enough to live doing the work of the gospel and then go, but I worry that before then the body may grow sick and weary and we may fall into temptation. That worries me most.

You too, when your body is sick somewhere, that becomes a stumbling block to your faith. Still, even in sickness, whatever

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your circumstance, if you take up some part of the work of the gospel—the mission through paper books and eBooks—and are faithful in that work, that is enough. Even when the body is well we cannot do many great things, and even when the body is sick it is no great hindrance. Rather, by faith one can do even more work. If your body is unwell you may wonder whether the church will cast us off, but it is not so. Such people can all be used as well, and they are all our family. There is much work to gather even the sick together and entrust to them. There is much to do—correcting documents, folding leaflets, cooking meals. There is nothing to fear. We have only to live well until that day.

The authority to preach the gospel belongs to those who have received the remission of sin

Why, after preaching much on these things in former days, do I preach them again now? Is the world not somewhat strange these days? Is the air not strange, and the world economy not strange? The economy is very bad, and the air of war is creeping up. Can we, then, stop war? The one thing we can do is pray like this: “Lord, protect our country. Protect and bless every department, so that we may serve the gospel, do the work of the gospel, and carry on the work of handing out eBooks and paper books.” God is making our country known to the world for the sake of the preaching of the gospel, so we have only to be faithful in this work.

What we can do is exactly this. Can we stop war? Can we stop artificial intelligence from advancing? By our own strength alone we are truly powerless. We can only preach the gospel. And even that work of preaching the gospel we can do because God has given us such authority. Because we deliver to people

the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit as a gift, the one who has received the Holy Spirit has authority. We are those who have received the authority to preach the gospel.

Only we can do this. Not just anyone can do it, and a sinner can do it even less. Only we who have received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit—the churches across the whole country, our saints, and the servants of God both men and women—can do it. Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received all the judgment for those sins in death, and rose from the dead in three days. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sin and receives salvation. If a person only reads this gospel rightly, believes in Jesus as God, and properly accepts what Jesus did, salvation has already come into that person's heart. That is a truly amazing thing.

Yet now, across the whole world, there are so many people who do not know this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even people who believe in Jesus do not know it. Most people do not yet know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. At first, some people say this term is not a word commonly used in Christianity and tell us to take the book back, sending it away. Some say that whatever differs from themselves is simply wrong, and that whatever their own church's pastor has not said is the end of the matter, cutting it off with one word. Even so, we bear with them and preach the gospel to them. Though for now, not knowing, they get irritated and shelve the book on the bookcase, one rainy day when they cannot go out to work, lying down and reading it, they find it rather interesting and slowly begin to be drawn in. Our books are not difficult. If one only grasps this term rightly, one begins to be drawn in, and reading through a whole book takes no time at all.

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What percentage of the whole world has this gospel reached? Even by a generous estimate, it is not yet much. At our present pace alone, it is in fact impossible to preach the gospel to all the whole world. But someday there will be one occasion when, through some matter touching the peace of the world, this faith becomes a great issue. When people then come and report on us, and what these people believe, and what kind of people those who have met them are, becomes known to the world, it will suddenly spread out to thirty percent, fifty percent. If we do up to seventy or eighty percent and the rest goes that way, is it not all done? When we have preached the gospel to the full and pass the gospel on to the next generation as well, I believe this word will then be fulfilled in full.

When you think of this, you who live in this present age are rather the happy ones. It is those who will live through a still more fearful world hereafter who are unhappy. How fearful will it be? Is that not so? So even if our bodies are sick, even if the world is in turmoil, we have only to be faithful to this work of the gospel. In times like these we must have a spiritual mainstay—an unshakable center of faith. That is absolutely necessary. God will surely accomplish this work.

So I want our workers to be people who believe God rightly and can stand firm, people who can be loved by God, people God can use. I do not want people who blindly obey me. I want people who are faithful before the Lord. Only then does each one receive God's love, receive God's guidance, become God's worker, and become a blessed person. I want you to be the kind of people whom the Lord, when He looks upon you, will delight in—of whom Jesus can say, "You are truly My servant; you are truly faithful." Then the Lord protects you and makes you live well. ✉

Let us look at the signs that will appear in the last days,
have hope, and be faithful in preaching the gospel

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who turns tribulation into an occasion for testimony and makes us lift up our heads

< Luke 21:5-28 >

"Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 'These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.' So they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?' And He said: 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am He," and, "The time has drawn near." Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.' Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your

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hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls. 'But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 'And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.'"

People spoke of the temple adorned with beautiful stones and donations, of its beauty and its scale. The temple, raised with long and careful labor, looked as though it would not easily be

shaken, and the pride of the nation that possessed that building was great. But Jesus pointed to the very temple people were marveling at and said, *"These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down" (Luke 21:6)*. To men's eyes the solid stones came into view first, but the Lord knew the day those stones would fall and even what would follow after.

The disciples asked when such things would happen and what sign would appear. To that question Jesus answered: do not be deceived, and do not be terrified when you hear of wars and commotions. Among the many voices that spoke of the last days, the standard the disciples had to hold fast was the word the Lord had spoken. Even for the time when the building before their eyes and the order of the world would collapse, the Lord told them in advance what to watch out for and how to live.

The Lord had them follow His own word rather than the claim that the time was near

Jesus first commanded, *"Take heed that you not be deceived" (Luke 21:8)*. He said that even if many come in the name of Jesus and say the time has drawn near, we are not to go after them. The mere fact that someone speaks the name of Jesus does not make his teaching the truth. We must examine whether his words agree with the written Scriptures, and whether he preaches exactly the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished. If he binds people to himself and holds out a particular date or place as though it were the way of salvation, he is following the deception the Lord warned against.

The Lord went on to say, *"When you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to*

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pass first, but the end will not come immediately" (Luke 21:9). Even when news of war and commotion is heard, we must not immediately identify that event with the last day. Jesus said that such things must come to pass first, and yet said plainly that the end does not come immediately. Therefore the believer must watch the times within the bounds the Lord has made plain, and continue the work of the gospel entrusted to him today.

Though the world is shaken, we believe the Lord who knew all things and spoke them. The Lord said that the stones of the temple would be thrown down, that nation would rise against nation, and that there would be earthquakes, famines, and pestilences. When we actually pass through such things, we come to know all the more clearly that the word the Lord spoke is being fulfilled just as it is. Since the Lord who knows the things to come told us not to be terrified, we must believe that word and continue, without stopping, the work of the gospel He has entrusted to us today.

Jesus said, *"There will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences" (Luke 21:11)*. People who lose house and food in disasters and suffer under disease will need practical help for food and shelter and healing. So the church, in order to seek out lost souls until the last days, must bear faithfully the work entrusted to it and prepare for the future. Through disasters we must also remember the fact that man cannot preserve this world forever, and the fact that the day comes when every person stands before the Creator. While we live, let us preach so that more souls may hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The command *"do not be terrified" (Luke 21:9)* is a word given to the disciples who had actual tribulation ahead of them. Jesus did not hide the weight of the tribulation, saying further on that some among the disciples would even be put to death. In the

midst of such tribulation the disciples had to believe the Lord's promise and speak the truth. Today let us also testify to the gospel, relying on the Lord who knows all things and gives the words and wisdom we need.

When we meet persecution, the Lord gives the words and wisdom to testify

Jesus said that before the wars and the great signs of nature, the disciples would be persecuted. They would be delivered up to the synagogues and prisons and brought before kings and rulers. Seen with the eyes of the world, being seized and put on trial looks like a scene where the ministry is blocked and defeated. But the Lord said, *"But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony" (Luke 21:13)*. The very act of setting the disciples before men in power to block the gospel becomes, rather, the occasion for preaching Jesus Christ to those very men in power.

We must ordinarily read the Scriptures and prepare ourselves to know and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit exactly. When persecution strikes, we must hold fast the word already received in our hearts and speak with the wisdom the Lord gives. Jesus promised, *"I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist" (Luke 21:15)*. Because the Lord who is the truth is with us and gives the words needed in that place, we can preach the gospel plainly even before threats.

We must learn the word in the church and know clearly what gospel we have believed to receive the remission of sin. When we are suddenly seized and questioned, we must hold fast the word we have learned and answer with the wisdom the Lord

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gives. The Lord sets the children who have received the Holy Spirit by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the places where they are needed, and has them speak the truth through their mouths.

The world's court sets the believer in the place of the accused, but when the gospel is proclaimed, everyone in that place becomes a hearer of the word concerning Jesus Christ. We must say plainly why we believe in Jesus, by what all the sins of our hearts were removed, and what hope we hold beyond death. With the mouth and wisdom the Lord gives, we must make plain what Jesus accomplished, so that those who hear may know the truth of salvation.

For one who believes in the Lord to be handed over by close family and relatives and friends can pain the heart more than persecution received from strangers. Jesus did not hide even that pain, saying that some among the disciples would be put to death. And yet He said, *"Not a hair of your head shall be lost" (Luke 21:18)*. These two words do not contradict each other. Those who persecute can harm the believer's body, but they can never take away the eternal life Jesus has given or the standing of a child of God. The Lord knows the end of His own people, and forgetting not one of them, He leads them into the eternal kingdom.

Jesus said, *"By your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:19)*. The remission of sin is not received as the wages of long endurance under persecution; it is received by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart. Patience in this word points to the life of one who already belongs to the Lord—who does not deny Jesus because of suffering, but stands believing to the end the life and the promise the Lord has given. Our flesh trembles before pain and wants to flee, but God makes our faith firm through the word and the church and gives us the

strength to endure. We do not boast of our own will; we rely on the Lord who holds us.

The heart of what we testify is the salvation Jesus completed

Before men in power we must testify to who Jesus Christ who saved us is, and to how He removed all the sins of the world. Jesus, who is in His essence God, came to this earth in the body of a man to save us who lay under sin. The Lord, who had no sin at all, received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, saying, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Through that baptism, Jesus received onto His own body all the sin mankind had committed.

After this was accomplished, John the Baptist saw Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. The Lord bore the sins passed on to Him through His baptism and carried them all the way to the Cross, and there He received the judgment of sin in our place, shed His blood, and actually died. Luke records that Jesus said, *"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" (Luke 23:46)* and then actually breathed His last. The Lord paid in full with His own life the price of all the sins passed on to Him through His baptism.

Jesus actually rose from the dead. To those who came to the tomb the angel proclaimed, *"He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:6)*. By rising the Lord overcame sin and death and accomplished in full the righteous work of salvation God had appointed. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all sins once

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and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. The child who has received the Holy Spirit believes and preaches, just as it is, this salvation Jesus accomplished.

In the last days, even the one who seizes us remains under sin and judgment if he does not hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore the believer must tell him the fact that Jesus, with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was passed even that person's sins onto His own body, and that bearing those passed-on sins He carried them all the way to the Cross, was judged in his place, shed His blood, died, and rose again. Believing the word that the Lord has appointed the place of persecution as an occasion for testimony, we must speak the truth of salvation plainly with the wisdom God gives.

The written days of vengeance show that the Lord's word is surely fulfilled

Jesus said concretely that when Jerusalem is surrounded by armies, those in Judea are to flee to the mountains, those in the midst of the city are to depart, and those in the country are not to enter the city. And He declared, *"These are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled" (Luke 21:22)*. At that time, whoever believed the Lord's word had to flee to the mountains and go out of the city according to that command. Faith in the Lord's word had to lead to actual deeds.

The tribulation that came upon Jerusalem shows that God judges sin and unbelief. Neither the splendid temple nor the standing of the religious leaders could ward off the vengeance of that day. Today also, we cannot stand before the Son of Man on the strength of long years of churchgoing or of church office.

For a sinner to stand before the Son of Man, all his sins must first be settled before God. God accomplished that way of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Jesus was passed all the sins of all mankind onto His own body with the baptism He received from John. The Lord bore those passed-on sins and carried them all the way to the Cross, received the judgment of sin there in our place, shed His blood and actually died, and rose again. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins and can stand before the Son of Man. We who are already saved do not take lightly the word of the Lord who warned of judgment. Even when the faults of our flesh are laid bare, we acknowledge that the word of God is right and set our thoughts and conduct straight.

Jesus said that in those days there is woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies. For war and siege lay the heavier suffering on the weakest. Reading this word, we must not condemn from a distance those who undergo the judgment, nor merely imagine the painful scene. The judgment of God is truly fearful, and when that day comes, no religious boast and no possessions a man has piled up will save anyone. Therefore the church, while opportunity remains, must speak honestly of sin and judgment, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit by which a sinner receives the remission of all his sins and can stand before the Son of Man.

The Lord's command to flee to the mountains was a concrete word given to those who were in Jerusalem at that time. To take this verse as grounds for deciding which region is safe at what time today, and to gather people there, is to add to the Lord's word what is not in it. We must apply the word watching the persons and the times the Scriptures have fixed. Only then can we distinguish the claims of deceivers from the commands the

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Lord actually gave, and keep from forcing our own thoughts on others as the will of God.

We must not arbitrarily link a present war or disaster to some one prophecy and speak of it as the settled will of God. What Jesus made plain Himself, we believe just as it is; the dates and the objects He did not make plain, man must not invent. The believer must preach the written word exactly. We must preach the outcome of sin and unbelief that the Lord made plain, and preach plainly also the gospel of the water and the Spirit He has already completed to save sinners.

When the Son of Man comes, we who are saved lift up our heads

The Lord said that when signs appear in the sun and the moon and the stars and the powers of the heavens are shaken, men will faint from fear at the thought of what is coming on the world. To the one who has held only to the world he possesses, the shaking of every order means every hiding place disappearing. Still more, the day when the Son of Man comes with power and great glory becomes a day of judgment for the one who holds his sins as they are. On that day, neither wealth nor position nor religious name will hide a single person.

The shaking of the powers of the heavens is not of a scale that man can stop with technology and institutions. When the order taken for granted until now collapses, the plain limit of man's ability is exposed. The Son of Man is the King who comes *"in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27)*. Jesus, who holds all authority, comes according to His promise and takes His people into the eternal kingdom. We set our hope on Jesus who is coming again.

But Jesus said to His disciples, *"When these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near" (Luke 21:28)*. Watching the same events, the people of the world faint with fear, but we who have received the remission of all sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit lift up our heads. God has already justified us, given us the Holy Spirit, and made us His own children; and when the Son of Man comes, He will glorify even the bodies of those children and complete the kingdom of God before our eyes. Therefore, looking upon the redemption drawn near, we are not pressed down again by the condemnation of sin, but wait for the salvation of the body and the eternal kingdom the Lord promised His people.

Jesus promised to hold His people and lead them into the eternal kingdom. Believing this promise, we must continue the work of the gospel entrusted to us even when fear rises. The Lord knows what persecution we will meet and when we will come to stand before Him, and He gives the words and wisdom we need and holds us to the end. Therefore we must hear the word we can hear today and preach the gospel we can preach today. Let us pray over the names of the people to whom we will preach the gospel, and when the chance to meet them comes, let us tell them the word of salvation plainly.

The one who waits for the second coming of the Lord must do his appointed work honestly, because he believes he will stand before the Son of Man. If he has done harm to a fellow member, he sets it right according to the word, and he uses preciously the time and the substance for preaching the gospel. Let us watch over the work the Lord has entrusted to us today, and serve souls in union with the church until the Lord comes.

Dear fellow believers, neither the beautiful temple nor the order of this world is eternal. But Jesus, who knew and spoke all

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that was to come, and the truth of the salvation He completed, do not change. We who have received the remission of sin have already chosen the way of living for the Lord. Therefore it is fitting to keep and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in union with the church. When persecution comes, let us testify to Jesus with the wisdom the Lord gives; and when the world is shaken, let us believe the written word and lift up our heads. Waiting for the day when the Son of Man who saved us comes with power and great glory, let us bear faithfully the work of the gospel entrusted to us. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Believe the written word

< Luke 21:5-38 >

"Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 'These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down.' So they asked Him, saying, 'Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?' And He said: 'Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am He," and, "The time has drawn near." Therefore do not go after them. But when you hear of wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end will not come immediately.' Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your

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head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls. ‘But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. ‘And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.’ Then He spoke to them a parable: ‘Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. ‘But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that

you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.' And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him."

The year draws to its close, and the day we meet the Lord draws near

After Christmas we come to hold the service that sees off the old year and welcomes the new. Then this year passes and we greet the new year. A year has gone by as if we had taken one day's nap. How quickly it has passed—while we fretted and bustled over our work, this year has already drawn to its close. I believe next year will pass even faster. The year after will be faster still, and the year after that faster yet, and rushing on without pause, I believe we will meet the Lord. Looking back, we have worked much and been busy with much, but the time has passed truly quickly.

On the basis of the word we have read today, I want us to think it over together, just as it is written. The people of Israel looked at the Jerusalem temple beautifully adorned and spoke of it. Then Jesus said, *"These things which you see—the days will come in which not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."* Then the disciples asked, *"Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign will there be when these things are about to take place?"*

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Do not be deceived

Jesus said the temple would surely be thrown down, and went on to speak of the last days of this world. Two thousand years ago from now, the disciples of Jesus and the people asked the Lord. They asked when that temple, built with such beautiful marble and with the offerings of so many people, would be thrown down. The Lord said it would surely be thrown down, and told them of the things of the last days. In the last days many appear who say that they themselves are the Christ, and they deceive people. He said, *"Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore do not go after them."* So He told us not to follow or believe them.

He also said that we will hear of wars and commotions, but that we are not to be terrified. These things must come to pass first, but that does not mean the end comes immediately. There will also be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences, and great signs from heaven; but what comes before all these things is the persecution received for the Lord's name. Delivered into men's hands, we are brought before the kings and rulers of the world and put on trial. But this turns out rather as a testimony for us, and the Lord gives words and wisdom that all our adversaries will not be able to resist or contradict.

When we are tried for My name's sake, the Holy Spirit gives us eloquence

From verse 10 the Lord spoke a truly important word. *"Then He said to them, 'Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful*

sights and great signs from heaven. But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist" (Luke 21:10–15).

Before the fearful sights and the great signs of heaven come, before the great earthquakes and the pestilences come, before the seven plagues are poured out on this earth and this world is destroyed, He said, we will surely be persecuted for the Lord's name and so come to testify before men to who Jesus Christ is. When these things happen, those who are born again are seized and delivered up before judges who are not born again. He said we may suffer such things even at the hands of our own families. *"You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But not a hair of your head shall be lost. By your patience possess your souls" (Luke 21:16–19).*

We must give ear to the word here, *"By your patience possess your souls."* These things will surely come upon us born-again saints. Before this world is destroyed, in the midst of tribulation, we will be dragged before those who hold the power of the world and be put on trial. At that time the Lord gives us the eloquence that can stand against them. And through whom do we suffer these things? We suffer them through your family and friends and mine—through the parents and friends of our flesh. Such things will come upon us.

The Lord said, *"By your patience possess your souls."* When these things come, we must believe that the destruction of this

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world has arrived. Enduring and bearing in faith, we come to obtain the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal kingdom that the Lord said He would give us Christians.

Do not be afraid; the Holy Spirit enables us to bear it

Therefore, you and I must never be afraid because the destruction of this world is coming. Neither should our hearts shrink. I know there may be some who think, "I have a hard enough time as it is; that story is dreadful. I wish he would not tell it, and even if that day comes, I wish I did not have to hear such sermons." But preaching like this is all for you and for me. When that day actually strikes, one is at a loss what to do. Unless we hear this word beforehand and furnish our hearts with faith, on that day we may be at a loss, and if things go wrong we may even receive the mark on our hand or receive the mark on our forehead and surrender to Satan the Devil. But even if you have not heard this word beforehand, on that day the Holy Spirit who is in your heart will work mightily, give you the words to say, and give you the strength and the faith and the new hope to endure the persecution. So do not be afraid.

What pains our hearts is that there will be cases where our parents in the flesh hand you over. Even a close friend will do such a thing. Will the heart not ache then? Yet when these things are fulfilled, the day is imminent when we receive as a gift the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal kingdom of the new heavens and the new earth that the Lord promised to the saved. Just as we received the gift of the remission of sin, the day when we receive the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal kingdom as a gift has drawn near. So even if these things come, do not let your hearts shrink. The Holy Spirit fully enables us to bear it.

The person who has received the remission of sin has the Holy Spirit in his heart. So when someone preaches the word of truth, the Holy Spirit acknowledges it as right. When someone preaches the word of God just as the word is, the Holy Spirit within acknowledges to our hearts that it is so. Therefore your heart and mine are drawn into the word and come to believe this word. Only the one who has the Holy Spirit is a child of God, and only the one who has the Holy Spirit is one of God's people. Then how do we receive this Holy Spirit? When we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of all the sins of the world, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in death, and rose from the dead—we receive the remission of sin and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. This Holy Spirit does everything for us. He gives strength, and He gives the strength to endure and bear and overcome pain. So never be afraid.

Frankly, let us talk among ourselves. In the old days, did we not see on television the scene of the torture that twists the legs? They would sit a man down, set two wooden bars against both his legs, and twist; they say it hurts so much that the flesh tears away. And in the days of the Japanese occupation, I have heard, they tortured people by driving bamboo under the fingernails. Some think, what would I do under such torture, what would I do under that torture—I could not stand it; how could I ever endure it? So there may even be some who, thinking of what is to come, resolve, "I could never endure it; when that day comes I will betray early, volunteer, go, and just receive the mark." But do not worry. When that day comes, the Holy Spirit who is within you and me holds fast our heart and thoughts and will and senses. Then it is not that we say whatever we please; even to one who cannot speak well and stammers, the Holy Spirit wonderfully gives all the words to say, and gives the strength to

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endure and overcome. This has nothing to do with whether we have ability or not. When that day comes, whoever has the Holy Spirit is given strength by God through the Spirit to bear it fully. Believe it without fail.

The Lord said, let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Him. He said He was going to prepare a place for us, and said that He is the way, the truth, and the life. Do not worry about anything. Only hear and believe what the Lord has said, and the Holy Spirit accomplishes the rest. With our flesh we can do nothing, but though man cannot, God does. Therefore we must not shrink before these things. The Lord said, *"I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist"*—so He will surely give them. Is there any need to be afraid?

The one who has no Holy Spirit trembles with fear on that day. There are people who now shout "I believe!" and cry "Lord!" three times, who go about looking holy in big church buildings that call themselves orthodox churches, and who hold the offices of senior deaconess, deacon, ordained deacon, elder, pastor, and bishop. But such religionists—those who say they believe Christianity while having no Holy Spirit within and no remission of sin in their hearts—tremble with fear when that day comes. Like soy sauce boiling down, they shrivel tight and in the end are burned black. Their hearts become like that, and I believe they go into the dark, burning hell. But the one who has the Holy Spirit is never so. Though a parent might forget his child and a child his parent—yet how could a parent ever forget his child? How much more did the LORD God say, How could I ever forget you? So never be afraid. If you believe this word, then, just because it is the word, you must acknowledge that these things will come. In Christ we can only say "Yes." When the Lord says He will do so, what other word could we speak? Is

that not so? When the Holy Spirit says He will do so within us on that day, we only say "Yes." Let us have faith.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of the Son of Man

From verse 20 the Lord spoke. *"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. 'And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.'" (Luke 21:20–28)*.

The word, *"When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near,"* is the Lord's showing, through an actual event, what will happen to this world. In fact the nation of Israel was destroyed in the first century. The word written here, that there is woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies, was at that time still a word of

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prophecy. But after the Lord died on the Cross, rose from the dead, and ascended, this word actually came upon them. The people of Israel fell by the edge of the sword and were led away captive as slaves into all the world, and were trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. The word the Lord prophesied was fulfilled exactly as it was.

But what will happen at the destruction of this world? He said, *"There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring."* It means that the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Something goes wrong in the world of the stars, and men faint from fear at the mere thought of this world being destroyed. At that time people will see our Lord coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things happen, He said, we are to know that our redemption is near.

The parable of the fig tree and the rebuilding of Israel

Concerning the nation of Israel, the Lord spoke once more with the parable of the fig tree. He said, *"Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:29–33)*. This is a word spoken concerning the Israel of today. Just as one knows, when the fig tree sprouts and its leaves grow thick, that summer is near, so when the nation of Israel is rebuilt, sprouts, and flourishes, we are to know that the time of the

Lord's coming is at hand.

Now Israel has recovered its nation again. Yet before this nation vanishes completely, Israel will be trampled once more by war. It will be trampled as the word here says. And when that nation is invaded once more and vanishes completely, that is the end. The moment that nation disappears, this world too is at its end. At that time the work of the people of Israel receiving the remission of sin takes place. Such things will come. So we only believe with Amen, saying, so it will be.

Take heed to yourselves, and watch and pray always

Since the Lord has told us these things that will be in the last days, we can only believe them just as they are. How then should we live in the present? On that point the Lord spoke from verse 34: *"Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (Luke 21:34–36).* The Lord said to take heed to ourselves. Otherwise our hearts sink into carousing and drunkenness and the cares of this life and grow dull, and we live on not knowing that the time of the Lord's coming is at hand, and so suffer much—that is the word.

Concerning the destruction of this world we can think of several things. First, before the earthquakes and the tribulation break out in earnest, you and I come to stand before the officials and judges of the world, and at that time the Holy Spirit gives

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the strength to bear it fully. Second, it is not only this earth on which we live that is destroyed; the end comes also to the powers of the heavens, to the galaxy and the world of the stars. All that the Lord has held together is thrown into disorder, colliding and breaking; the axis of the heavens is shaken, and this earth too is shaken and perishes. Third, when these things happen, we must truly believe and take heed. Even though we are born again, if while living in this world our hearts sink into carousing or drunkenness, or into the cares of this life—how shall we live, what shall we eat—we may fail to see fulfilled, just as He spoke it, the word that the Lord is coming, and fail to have our faith prepared; of this we are to take heed.

The Lord said that the destruction of this world and the Lord's coming are not things that come upon some individual only. This Day comes upon all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Therefore, so that we may escape all these tribulations that will come to pass and stand before the Son of Man, we must hold faith. We must wait for that day in faith, live so as not to sink into the cares of this life, and, since these things will come, not sink too deeply into the world. Though our bodies are set in the world, we must hold faith, watch closely how the world is turning, and believe what the Lord will do hereafter. And what you and I must do is first seek the kingdom and the righteousness of the Lord, preach the gospel to the whole world, and prepare in faith. So that when that day comes, we may confess like the Apostle John, *"Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"* and have the faith of a bride who truly welcomes the Lord. We must have such faith. Do not pass it by without believing in your heart. Even if your deeds cannot follow, this is the written word of God, so receive it into your heart. Though your deeds fall short, believe with your heart. We only say "Yes." Then all the rest God accomplishes.

Watching the changes of politics and climate, let us think of the day the Lord comes

In world politics today regimes change, and one country's economy revives while another's shrinks greatly. Unusual climate also appears in place after place across the world, and heavy snows and floods and earthquakes follow one another. Such things have always been; but seeing these changes of politics and changes of climate, we ought to consider whether the day of the Lord's coming, as recorded in this word, is drawing near.

In the old days, they say, a certain pastor waited whenever even a cloud floated by outside his window, wondering whether our Lord might be coming. Since the Lord said He would come riding on a cloud, whenever a cloud rose he wondered whether the Lord might be riding up there, and so he longed for the day of the Lord's coming. Yet there are many cases where the saved do not long for the Lord's coming but long only for other things of this earth. Of course we should enjoy all the things of this earth God has given, but above all we ought to long in our hearts for the Lord's coming. Let us not worry about anything, but do what we can do now—read and preach this written word and believe it with the heart. We simply believe. Let us believe this word of God. Have faith.

Today an email came from Africa. The sender said he had received the books and was reading them well, and wrote this. Until now he had known that one is born again by praising and praying and going on that way; but reading this book, he came to know that it is not so, and that one is born again by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He said it was truly amazing to come to know, through this book, the truth that no one had ever taught him. So we had sent a box of books, and the

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message asked whether, since many people are reading them now, we could send even fifty more.

Let us believe the written word of God

Even if the Lord comes—even if that day comes tomorrow—today we will preach this gospel. Just as He said, we will be seized and brought before the officials and come to say what we are to say, and they will persecute us for believing in Jesus. But at that time the Holy Spirit who is within you and me gives amazing wisdom and understanding, and puts into our mouths words they can by no means refute. What pains our hearts is that we will suffer parents, and friends too, seizing you and me and setting us before the judges. Therefore, if we can, we must preach this gospel to our friends, and further to our parents as well. When that day comes, the Devil enters the hearts of the people who have no Holy Spirit and makes their hearts the Devil's own heart. Then, even if among their own children there is one who is born again, that child looks to them like a devil. In their eyes we look like devils, so they seize us, set us before the court, and torment us. Suffering such things from others can be borne, but suffering them from friend and parent is a painful thing. Therefore we must pray for the salvation of our families, and since these things will actually come, we must meet them all well, believing every word.

I believe that in this age we must share this word together. I believe many astonishing changes will come upon the world. As the text says, nation rises against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and wars break out everywhere without number. Now there are many countries that cannot fight because the great powers are involved. Take our own country: with North Korea

and the United States and China intertwined, it cannot fight; and Israel and its neighboring countries, and many other nations too, refrain from war only because the great powers are involved. But wars will break out everywhere. Since the Lord said these things will happen in abundance, I believe they will be fulfilled just so. Because I believe, I speak; because I believe, I prepare; because I believe, I preach this gospel.

I believe. When we proclaim this gospel of the water and the Spirit on His behalf, if only the hearer believes, he receives the remission of sin. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of all the sins of the world, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose from the dead—receives the remission of sin and receives salvation. That is why I say, preach it, proclaim it. I too proclaim it. Whoever the other person may be, if we till the field of his heart and sow the seed of the gospel and he only receives it, he receives the remission of sin.

This word was spoken not to some individual only but to you and to me. Therefore, believing this word that destruction is coming upon this world, we must live the present in faith, preparing for that day. We who are born again must do the work we ought to do, and live each year in faith. God will have us do still more work hereafter. In the days ahead, one year will hold as much work as the ten or twenty years we have passed through. The work of God—the gospel—will be preached that widely across the whole world. Within a few years the gospel will have been preached to all the whole world.

Across the whole world, besides us, there are many people who read these books and believe, and who, pondering what they should do, preach the gospel. I believe and preach the word. I know that you also believe this word. Believing, waiting for that

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day to come—when the gospel has been preached to all the world, one final work of harvest remains. When disaster falls on this earth, those who are unprepared are terrified. Without the preparation of faith, even the born again are at a loss on that day. It is those who are not born again, and your families, who will be the problem. At that time your families will say, "You were right—please, do something for me." But in that day it will be hard to gather in numbers and preach the gospel, for we may be seized; so we will gather in inner rooms and come to preach the gospel to our families. The time of our being seized and killed will not be long then; it may end in a month. So before then we must lay up in advance the food our families will eat, preparing to call our families together at that time and preach the gospel to them. If you call them, your families will come readily, and once they come, they will almost all believe. When we teach them, they then receive the remission of sin, and the Holy Spirit works mightily.

Dear fellow believers, this is the word of God, and what I have preached is the word of the Scriptures. Do you believe that this word is the word of God? Simply believe. Then the Lord takes care of the rest. If one does not believe, where is there a person more evil than he? The one who does not believe in his heart has a root of bitterness in his heart. Even if the Lord were to come tomorrow, today we will eat and drink and live faithfully. It was said that as the last day draws near, those who say that they themselves are Jesus Christ will appear, and the Lord told us not to believe their words. Such words we must not believe, but the written word of God we must believe in full. We believe this word. We give thanks. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Take heed to yourselves

< Luke 21:29-36 >

"Then He spoke to them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. 'But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.'"

The parable of the fig tree and the kingdom of God drawn near

I want to share from the word we have read today. The Lord spoke in a parable: *"Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:29–31)*. Just as, when a tree sprouts, we see it and know that summer is near, so when we see those things happening that He spoke of

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before, we are to know that the kingdom of God is near.

The Lord went on to speak like this: *"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:32–33)*. Before this generation passes away, all those things will be fulfilled. Though heaven and earth pass away, the word of the Lord never passes away. Therefore this word is surely fulfilled just as it stands.

In the word we have read today, the earlier part tells of the disasters that are to come. Natural disasters occur, and men's hearts grow hardened, so that they persecute the righteous and seize and kill them. Earthquakes occur, and nationalism swells, so that nation rises against nation and kingdom against kingdom and war breaks out. Having spoken of these things, the Lord closes His word from verse 34 like this: *"Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly"*

The end of the world arrives: disaster and tribulation come, earthquakes and famines come, disease spreads, and war breaks out. Before the whole world collapses like that, unless we take heed to ourselves—unless we stay awake, pray, and lead our life of faith—man gets drunk and dissolute and is caught in the snare called the cares of this life. Because worry over making a living comes first and he cannot deal rightly with that problem, he cannot prepare for the signs of the day of the Lord's coming.

This word is spoken to us the righteous. Even the righteous, if he is caught in the snare of living so that his heart grows dull, and he cannot properly solve the problem of food, clothing, and shelter and so can only live fretting and anxious all the time, does not know when the Lord is coming or how this age is flowing. Then one day he suddenly meets that disaster, is killed, and

comes to ruin. In the end, like the servant who received one talent, he ends up cast off by the Lord. Truly, in this last age the problem of making a living—of food, clothing, and shelter—is a matter of great weight.

The vanity of a life that chases material things

I once spoke from the word of Matthew chapter 6, saying that we must follow God and must not follow material things. Chase after money and it seems you will succeed, but in the end you come to ruin. By what can we see that outcome? We can see it by looking at those who lived life ahead of you and me—the parents of our flesh. All their lives they followed material things, walking steadily the one road of earning money to live. And yet they could not even properly solve the problem of their own food, clothing, and shelter, and could not properly leave to their children what they might have left; living so and dying in vain—that is life.

Therefore we too must not make light of this problem of eating, drinking, and sleeping—of food, clothing, and shelter. What is it that man, born into this earth, pours his greatest strength into? It is eating. Eating breakfast and lunch and supper; next, clothing; and next after that, sleeping. If a man has no house, he must pay money to sleep even at an inn; he must pay to sleep even at a motel. This matter of sleeping and dressing and eating is by no means light. So even the righteous, if he falls into the cares of this life and has no ability to solve the problem of food, clothing, and shelter, struggles at this all his life, loses even his life of faith, and in the end dies. In the old days there were times when, having no food, one scraped and scraped at the empty jar. When there was no rice and the children had eaten it

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all, our mothers took that matter gravely and were deeply troubled. Since our mothers took this matter so seriously, is it not right that we too regard this problem of food, clothing, and shelter as weighty?

The nearer the last day comes, the more we must keep our wits about us and lead our life of faith. Do not get drunk, do not be dissolute, do not fall into the cares of this life, but live well. Live by faith and preach the gospel to others; live for this, and so meet the Lord. Whenever the Lord comes, if we are alive until then we will meet the Lord in faith; and even if not, we must discern well the flow of the times, prepare well, live so, and meet the Lord. The word tells us to prepare for that.

Within the church, food, clothing, and shelter are provided for

Eating and drinking and dressing are by no means easy things. Being within this Church of God, it may look as though eating and drinking and dressing come about of themselves. But it is not that these things cost no money. Money goes into everything. Money is earned and gathered, and gathered again, and used to print books and send books for the preaching of the gospel, to repair and prepare the workplaces for serving the gospel, and to pay taxes. Money goes also into what you and I eat and drink. Food never simply drops from the sky. Even if we farm and eat, money has gone into all that farming.

Let us think once. If someone does not unite in this work our Church of God is now doing but, disliking that work, goes out and does some work alone, for the sake of what does that person do that work? For the problem of food, clothing, and shelter—eating and drinking and dressing and sleeping—for exactly that

he does it. For that he strives, for that he grovels and cringes, for that he labors himself to death. Paying his taxes, he works today and tomorrow, and keeps on a month, a year. So he toils all his life long and dies—without ever once doing a right work.

That is why the Lord spoke to us the righteous. These disasters will come; the nation of Israel will be isolated and trampled by the Gentiles; natural disasters will come, and nations will even make war on one another. If you and I, living in such an age, sink deep into the cares of this life—thinking, unless I earn, my family and I can hardly live; unless I work today too, we can hardly get by—then we cannot preach the gospel. We cannot lead the life of faith either. We do the work of serving the gospel within the church. Working hard together and gathering, we print books and send books, provide for the workers' food, clothing, and shelter, and live sparing to the utmost and helping others. And so, at the least, within the church the problem of food, clothing, and shelter is solved. In fact, if we did not preach the gospel, we could live far better than this. But we live like this in order to preach the gospel.

Do not fall into the cares of this life

The Lord also spoke like this: in the last days the powers of this universe are shaken, and the world of the stars is shaken. When the powers of heaven are shaken, He said, the sea roars. The sea gives voice and cries. Do you know why the waves beat in that sea? Because there is the moon. Because the moon and the earth pull each other by gravity, the waves rise. On some days the moon comes nearer, and as they circle each other, when the rubbing parts draw close, the seawater pushes in upon the land and swells up. This is not a thing done by man's effort.

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However we labor, buckets in hand, we can never raise waves on that great sea. That is possible only in a bathhouse. This universe hangs in the void by the power of mutual attraction, interlocked and turning together. But at the last, this order is all broken, and destruction comes.

Then, when these things strike, how should we live? I think that solving well this problem of food, clothing, and shelter is the secret of success in the life of faith. I cannot say it is everything, but so I think. If our church could not solve the problem of food, clothing, and shelter, and could not do this work of gathering money and printing books and sending them, we could not do the other right works either. That is why the Lord said not to be caught in the snare called the cares of this life. For when worry over making a living comes first and one grows pressed with want, one cannot do the right work.

By one's own strength alone it is hard to accomplish anything. Suppose, for example, we went to sea to catch tuna. Of course one can catch them alone. There are men who wage a desperate fight with a line or a harpoon, barely haul up one fish, and earn their money. But alone it is truly hard. So on a very large tuna boat the captain, the engineer, the navigator, and many others board together, and each at his post they carry out the operation, lower the nets, drive the tuna, and catch them. As the teeth of cogwheels mesh and turn, all unite to catch the tuna, freeze them on ice and sell them, cover the fuel and the running of the boat, pay the wages, and solve the problem of food, clothing, and shelter. For us also, to preach the gospel and yet try to solve the problem of food, clothing, and shelter by the strength of oneself and one's family alone is truly hard. Perhaps it is impossible. Though one labors to death, even feeding one's own family is hard.

Look once at the people of the world. Look at the households

and the working men who fight each alone, striving to feed only their own families. They live on the tightest of margins. Earning a little money, they pay for fuel, pay the utility bills, buy a little rice, buy the child one suit of clothes, buy him shoes, send him to school, and pay the fees—and their heads spin. Living hand to mouth like that, they strive over nothing but the problem of food, clothing, and shelter until the day their life ends, and die. And the child, too, inherits a little of his parents' property, studies himself half to death and strives to solve the problem of food, clothing, and shelter, and then dies like his parents. In this way it is passed down generation after generation: without knowing it they teach, "You too live as I lived," and go.

If you do not work even a day, you cannot gather money. Idle even one month and things grow hard; if a salaried man idles a year without working, the household is ruined. Why did the homeless become homeless? Among them are many who once worked themselves to death as section chiefs or department heads of companies. Then they were forced into early retirement, wandered here and there looking for work, and at last could not go home. If they earned money and went in, the family would welcome them; but earning nothing, they kept deceiving, and in the end, having no face to show, they could not enter their own homes. Sleeping outside one night, then two nights, the street life sank into them, and they became homeless altogether. There are countless fathers who bear the duty of returning and feeding their families but have no ability, and who cannot go in because they have no standing to enter. What are we, that we should be different from them? We must give thanks that we have not fallen into the snare of living. At the least, within the church one does not fall into the cares of this life. Though we do not dress finely, we have something to put on; we have a place to sleep; and as for food, this much will do.

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In the old days I too once briefly lived the life of an employee. Eight hours a day I was bound to that place, and in those hours I had to move as the owner wished. To strive so and bring home a few coins was a truly wretched thing. If I left the church and lived for myself alone, I would be bound to my own work and would have to labor to death. Then how could I lead the life of faith, and how could I preach the gospel for others?

In these last days, one wrong step and you cannot even get hired. Where is there a place to go out and hold a job? They borrowed money on credit cards here and there to start a business, and having no ability to repay, they stop that debt with this money and stop this debt with other money, going round and round. Yet if they did not do even that self-employment, they would become utter beggars and homeless, so they do it because they cannot help it. Do not think that because someone has opened a shop he earns much money. It is far worse than holding a job. But since they cannot get hired, they barely feed themselves on severance pay or loans.

Without practicing deceit it is not easy to earn money in trade. To feed one's own family is by no means an easy thing. Only by striving does one barely eat, barely keep body and soul together, barely dress, barely sleep. Those who borrowed money, bought an apartment, and married—because the price of the apartment fell, though husband and wife earn together and repay month by month, they do not know when they will have repaid it all. To borrow hundreds of millions of won and pay them back month by month may take a whole lifetime.

Why would I tell you these things? It is not to threaten you. It is because this is reality. Neither I nor you must fall into the cares of this life. Try to lead the life of faith alone, and your faith surely falls into the cares of this life. So we must keep our wits sharp. The brothers sitting in these front rows may say that the

pastor went somewhere again today and is frightening us again. But this is not to frighten you. Like teaching at the family table, it must be told again and again—when we eat, when we meet, when I preach. This is the actual state of things, the reality. I have not added the least thing nor made up anything absurd. Making a living is that hard.

Looking from verse 5, the earlier part of this chapter, there is the word that not one stone of the temple will be left upon another, the word to take heed not to be deceived, and the word not to be terrified though we hear of wars and commotions. After speaking all the words—that nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and that earthquakes and wars will come—the Lord exhorts at the last like this: let not your hearts grow dull with the cares of this life. If one is hard pressed by the problem of food, clothing, and shelter, then the life of faith and all the rest—preaching the gospel to others—cannot even be thought of. When one cannot even look after oneself, what leisure is there to think of others? Busy feeding oneself, whether another receives salvation or not comes to matter nothing at all.

That is why the Lord, at the very last, said not to get drunk and be dissolute and not to fall into the cares of this life—to solve that problem, keep our wits about us, and live for the gospel. Only then can we know when the Lord is coming, and only then can we lead the life of faith rightly until the day the Lord comes, and so go. How weighty must this matter have been, that after speaking all those weighty words the Lord nailed it down at the last: do not fall into the cares of this life! It is because the cares of this life ruin the life of faith that much. So we must understand it. Those of you here are truly blessed people. Honestly, do we have anything to worry about over the problem of food, clothing, and shelter? We are happy people. For even if we live but one day, we live for the preaching of the gospel.

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To lose faith is to lose everything

In the world they say that if you lose wealth you have lost some part of life, if you lose honor you have lost some more, and if you lose health you have lost everything. But for people who lead the life of faith as we do, what is it truly to lose everything? If someone says that he once believed the faith in God—the gospel of the water and the Spirit—but does not believe it now, that person has lost everything. That person is finished.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is this. Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in death, and rose from the dead in three days. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sin and receives salvation. The one who believed this gospel and then casts it away is the very one who loses everything. What, pray, has the church done so wrong that one cannot believe God and cannot believe the church? It is a truly grievous thing.

Yet the life of faith is free. I speak only to those who are within. It is the same for those advanced in years and for the young, and for the youths growing up like sprouting shoots. At fourteen or fifteen one is by no means a child but an adult. Within this church everything is prepared. God has so blessed us that if one would lead the life of faith, one can do so as much as one pleases, and if one would preach the gospel, one can preach as much as one pleases. I pray that you will not fall into the snare called the cares of this life.

Proverbs says, *"A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire."* The one who would leave the company spoken of here—this company of God's born-again people—and live apart, seeks to live following his own personal desire. And what is one's own personal desire? To earn much money and eat much,

to drink and smoke, and to live after one's own lusts. Let us not live such a life, but lead the life of faith well.

The great life lived for the gospel

What I want to say is this. After the Lord had spoken all those grave words before, the warning He gave at the last is exactly this: take heed to yourselves; be careful of yourselves. Careful of what? Careful lest the heart grow dull because of the cares of this life. If life is not settled and the problem of food, clothing, and shelter is not solved, how can one think of others and think of the preaching of the gospel? One cannot. Therefore we must first get free of the cares of this life. Only then can we live much for others and for the preaching of the gospel.

Do not say that eating and sleeping and dressing are nothing. In the flesh, those are the most important things to man. Spiritually God is most important, but in the flesh it is those three problems. All the people of the world live their whole lives to solve exactly that, and die. But we have solved that problem and come to live for others, so we are truly happy people. I am a truly happy person, and you also are truly happy people. The one who casts this away and leaves is an unhappy person, one who has lost everything. So I regard it. It is I who pity them; there is nothing for them to pity me over.

When one person leaves, those who remain are only a little busier and take a little more pains. But done step by step, it gets done. Whether one works well or poorly, all eat alike and the work all moves along—what worry is there? When I see the brothers working in the sweltering heat, my heart goes out to them. So I think we must make a better environment to work in. I hope you will work so that your bodies are not hurt and you do

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not strain too far. All of that is living for the Lord. Whether your labor is small or great, it is all done for the Lord, and so it is a rewarding work.

If you did that work merely to make a living, how wretched a thing would it be? Think of it as work done because there is no other way to live—a truly wretched life. But we, though we must also make our living, do this work for the preaching of the gospel. Then it is not a wretched thing but a right work, a truly great work. I believe this work is nothing to be ashamed of. However we earn, let us only do no evil; and if the money earned is spent on greatly useful and right work, that is indeed a great work. We are doing a work greater than that of any other person in this world. So I believe. I hope you will believe so too.

I earnestly pray that He will keep us from falling into the cares of this life, from dissoluteness, from getting drunk and losing our senses, and from going corrupt. I pray also that He will have us keep on doing right work, and that He will give health and faith and blessing to this work of the gospel served in God's church, to the workplaces and to the workers—blessing and care for spirit and for flesh. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Believe the word that will by no means pass away and watch always

< Luke 21:29-36 >

"Then He spoke to them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. 'But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man.'"

When the trees sprout, a man knows summer is near without checking the calendar again. The change before his eyes tells him the season has drawn near. Jesus did not speak of one fig tree only but told us to look at all the trees, and said that when the things He had spoken of before appear, we are to know that the kingdom of God is near. The signs the Lord spoke of tell us

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that the kingdom of God is actually drawing near and that His word is surely fulfilled.

After speaking of the great tribulation to come, Jesus told His disciples to examine their own hearts. The Lord identified exactly what dulls the heart—carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life—and commanded them to watch and pray always, that they might escape the things that will come to pass and stand before the Son of Man. Therefore the disciples had to set their hearts on the Lord's word that will by no means pass away, and examine their thoughts and their living before that word.

As we see the sprouting of the trees, we must know that the kingdom of God is near

Jesus said, *"Look at the fig tree, and all the trees" (Luke 21:29)*. The sprout shows plainly that summer is approaching. In the same way, when the things He spoke of before appear, we must know that the kingdom of God is near. The order of this earth is not eternal, and the kingdom that Jesus Christ rules actually comes.

We must watch the signs within the bounds the Lord made plain in the written word. We must not arbitrarily decide where some war or earthquake falls in the timetable of the last days, nor invent dates and orders that are not written. The word *"know that the kingdom of God is near" (Luke 21:31)* turns our eyes toward the kingdom of God that will actually come.

The one who knows that the kingdom of God is near must bear honestly the responsibility the Lord has entrusted to him today. We must use our bodies and time and substance according to the Lord's will, and bear the work of the gospel together with

the church. And we must tell the word of salvation to the souls who have not yet heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because we believe the Lord's kingdom has drawn near, we use today's hours preciously.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."

Jesus declared, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Luke 21:33)*. Even the earth we set our feet on and the heavens we always look up at have a day when they will pass away, but not one of the words of Jesus disappears. Since the word of the Lord, more certain than heaven and earth, has already been given, we can prepare for the future by that word. Circumstances keep changing, but the facts the Lord has spoken concerning sin and salvation and judgment and the kingdom of God do not change.

We must hear the word in quiet times, believe the same word in hard times, and go on bearing the work of the gospel entrusted to us. Since all the Lord has spoken will be fulfilled, our faith and the direction our church takes must also be set to that word.

The word of Jesus judges our hearts and lives even now. The one who believes that word thinks first of the eternal kingdom of God and of souls. When we decide what to choose and where to spend our time, we must make the Lord's word the standard.

The Lord said, *"This generation will by no means pass away till all things take place" (Luke 21:32)*, and immediately made plain that His own words do not pass away. What Jesus has spoken does not fail in a single point but is surely fulfilled. Therefore we must examine ourselves according to the Lord's command, and watch and pray always.

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What do you hold most certain as you live? Visible possessions and institutions can change some day, and men's promises too can break with circumstances. But the word of salvation—that Jesus, with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was passed all the sins of the world onto His own body, and bearing those sins carried them all the way to the Cross, received the judgment in our place, shed His blood and actually died, and rose again, and so removed all our sins—and the promise of the Lord that He will come again, do not pass away. The one who has not yet believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit must hear and believe the word of the salvation Jesus Christ actually accomplished. We who have already received the remission of sin believe that the Lord's judgment is right even amid the shortcomings of the flesh and the changes of circumstance, and set our thoughts and conduct straight according to that word.

Carousing, drunkenness, and the cares of this life make the heart dull

The Lord said directly to His disciples, *"Take heed to yourselves" (Luke 21:34)*. Carousing makes us scatter after our desires the body and time and substance God has given; drunkenness makes us lose discernment; and the cares of this life make us think on and on of nothing but the problem of making a living. When the heart is taken captive by these three, we hear the word yet fail to receive its meaning deeply, and come to count the desires and worries before our eyes greater than the kingdom of God. Therefore we must examine our hearts before the word.

To eat and clothe ourselves, to secure a dwelling, and to care

for our families is a responsibility we must bear faithfully. But when the cares of this life press down the heart, earning money becomes the only aim of life, and the work for the word and the church and souls is pushed ever behind. One may have much and still worry over losing it; one may have little and still believe God and bear one's appointed responsibility calmly. Therefore we must examine what it is that rules our hearts.

In us also, who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the desires and worries of the flesh arise. The fact that we are saved has not removed the weakness of the flesh, so we do not take lightly the possibility of our hearts growing dull. We do not justify dissolute conduct, nor hand our thoughts over to drink or other desires; and when hardship of living arises, we do not hide it alone or only feed our worry, but take counsel with the church. Because the word of God is right, we acknowledge wrong thoughts and deeds and correct them, and while handling in due order what must be done, we keep the center of our hearts on the Lord.

The heart does not grow dull suddenly one day for no reason. When we keep putting off the hours in which we ought to hear the word, keep justifying what the flesh wants, and repeat our anxious thoughts all day long, the promise of the Lord begins to sound small in the heart. Then we grow keen about the things of the world while indifferent to sin and salvation and the kingdom of God. That is why the Lord told us, before we judge anyone else's state, *"Take heed to yourselves" (Luke 21:34)*. We must examine before the word what our hearts keep thinking of and where our time is spent, and actually clear away the habits that make us dull.

The cares of this life are different from planning responsibly. One can believe the word of God even while reckoning necessary costs and laying plans for work. Worry replays in the

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heart failures that have not yet happened, and keeps us from praying to God, from asking help of the members, and from doing what must be done today. Therefore the believer, rather than staying bound in vague anxiety, must lay the problem out plainly and handle it in order, dividing what he can do himself from what needs the church's help.

However much substance one piles up, one cannot grasp tomorrow in one's own hand. God feeds His children with the word within the church and has the members bear one another's burdens. We must work faithfully while we can work, use honestly the substance entrusted to us, and care for one another so that a member in hardship does not collapse alone. Caring in this practical way for one another's circumstances, we must keep at the center the gospel of the water and the Spirit that brings souls to life.

To be united with the church does not mean handing over to others all one's own judgment and responsibility. Each person cares faithfully for his own body and family and appointed work, while sharing with the members the problems that are hard to solve alone and receiving together the guidance of the word. The forward workers of the church do not drive a member whose living is hard into a corner as one without faith; they hear his actual circumstances, give the help they can, and seek together the work that member can bear. And the member who has received help does not stay in a passive place, but takes up the work he can bear and serves the gospel with the church. When burdens are shared like this, the cares of this life cannot swallow up any one person's heart, and the church can continue the work for souls.

Carousing and drunkenness, too, must not be left as one person's hidden problem. If someone, dragged by desire, is harming his body and his substance, then while he hides it to

keep appearances his heart grows still duller. The child who is already saved acknowledges his fault because the Father's word is right, tells the truth to a trustworthy member and to one who goes before him, and receives concrete help to break off that conduct and set his life upright.

The way to stand before the Son of Man is in the salvation the Lord completed

Jesus told us to watch and pray always, that we might escape all the things that will come to pass and stand before the Son of Man. The one who has sin cannot stand before the holy Son of Man by holding up his own deeds. Nor can we pay the price of sin by gathering up our hours of watchful prayer and our acts of self-restraint. God judges the one who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus Christ completed for us, to be a righteous person clean from all sins.

Jesus Christ, who is in His essence God, came in the body of a man to save us from sin and judgment. John the Baptist was sent ahead as the one who would prepare the way of the Lord and give His people the knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins. Jesus, who had no sin, received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. With that baptism the Lord was passed all the sins of the world committed by the descendants of Adam onto His own body.

Jesus bore the sins passed on to Him through His baptism and carried them all the way to the Cross. There He received the judgment of sin in our place, shed His blood, and actually died; and the record, *"Having said this, He breathed His last" (Luke*

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23:46), testifies plainly that the Lord actually died on the Cross. But the tomb did not become the Lord's last place. The angel proclaimed, *"He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:6)* and Jesus, by rising from the dead, overcame sin and death and completed all the righteousness of God and our salvation.

The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives once and for all the remission of all the sins of the world and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, becoming a child of God. The Scripture testifies, *"By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14)*. Since Jesus Himself became the offering of sacrifice for us and has perfected forever those who believe, the child whom God has justified waits, believing the completed salvation, for the day of standing before the Son of Man.

Jesus was passed our sins onto His own body with the baptism He received from John, and bearing those passed-on sins He carried them all the way to the Cross, received the judgment for those sins in our place, shed His blood, died, and rose again. Therefore, for the one who believes this gospel, there remains no price of sin to pay before God. God judges righteous the one who believes the righteousness of God that Jesus completed, and that child stands before the Son of Man leaning on the merit of the Lord. If sin still remains in your heart, you must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit Jesus accomplished and receive the remission of all your sins.

That we escape all the things the Lord spoke of does not mean, either, that we pass through none of the world's tribulation. For in this same chapter He already said that the disciples may be persecuted and put to death. What the believer must escape is falling into deception and denying Jesus, or having his heart stolen away by dissipation and worry and meeting that day with nothing prepared. Though pain comes to

the flesh, to believe the word that will by no means pass away and to stand before the Son of Man as a child God has justified—this is the Lord's promise.

God's child, who has received the remission of all sins and received the Holy Spirit, must trust and lean on the Father and watch and pray always. We tell God the worries of our hearts without hiding them; through the word we discern what to do first; and receiving the church's exhortation, we use our time and body and substance rightly. The Lord so leads the children who believe His word and has them prepare for the day of the Son of Man.

The one who watches and prays always bears the work entrusted to him today

Jesus said that that Day will come *"on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:35)*. Every person comes to stand before the Son of Man. The one who still holds sin must believe with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that enables him to stand before the Son of Man, and receive the remission of all his sins. We who have believed this gospel wait for that day leaning on the salvation Jesus completed.

We who have already become God's children must obey the command, *"Watch therefore, and pray always" (Luke 21:36)*. Believing the Lord's promise, we must tell God the work now entrusted to us and pray for the salvation of family and members. We must ask Him to open the doors for preaching the gospel, and ask also for the wisdom and the help to bear the hardships of living. We must make our subjects of prayer clear, and share with the members what the church should ask together. And after praying, we must work according to the word, take counsel with

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the church, and actually open the way to preach the gospel.

The watchful one must bear the work of the gospel entrusted to him in the church. If the body is weak or circumstances are hard, he must take counsel with the members and find the work he can bear. The saved person has already left the road of living only for himself and chosen the road of living for the Lord; so it is fitting that each one, at his appointed place, keep and preach the gospel in union with the church.

When it comes to light that the heart has grown dull, we, God's children, because His word is right, put in order the time and substance spent dissolutely, depart from drunkenness and desire, and set upright again the place of the word and of prayer pushed aside by the cares of this life. If by our fault we have hurt another, we acknowledge it, apologize, and set right what can be set right. God has already called us, who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, righteous; and His children set their thoughts and deeds straight to match the Father's word.

Dear fellow believers, just as one knows summer is near when the trees sprout, know, as you see the things the Lord spoke of, that the kingdom of God is near. Keep in your heart the word of Jesus that is more certain than heaven and earth, and do not let carousing, drunkenness, or the cares of this life push that word out. We who have received the remission of all sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit are children of God who will stand before the Son of Man. Let us watch and pray always, bear honestly the responsibility entrusted to us today, and, together with the church, tell the word of salvation to the souls who have not yet heard this gospel. Let us believe the word of the Lord that will by no means pass away and live faithfully until the day He comes. ✉

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CHAPTER

22

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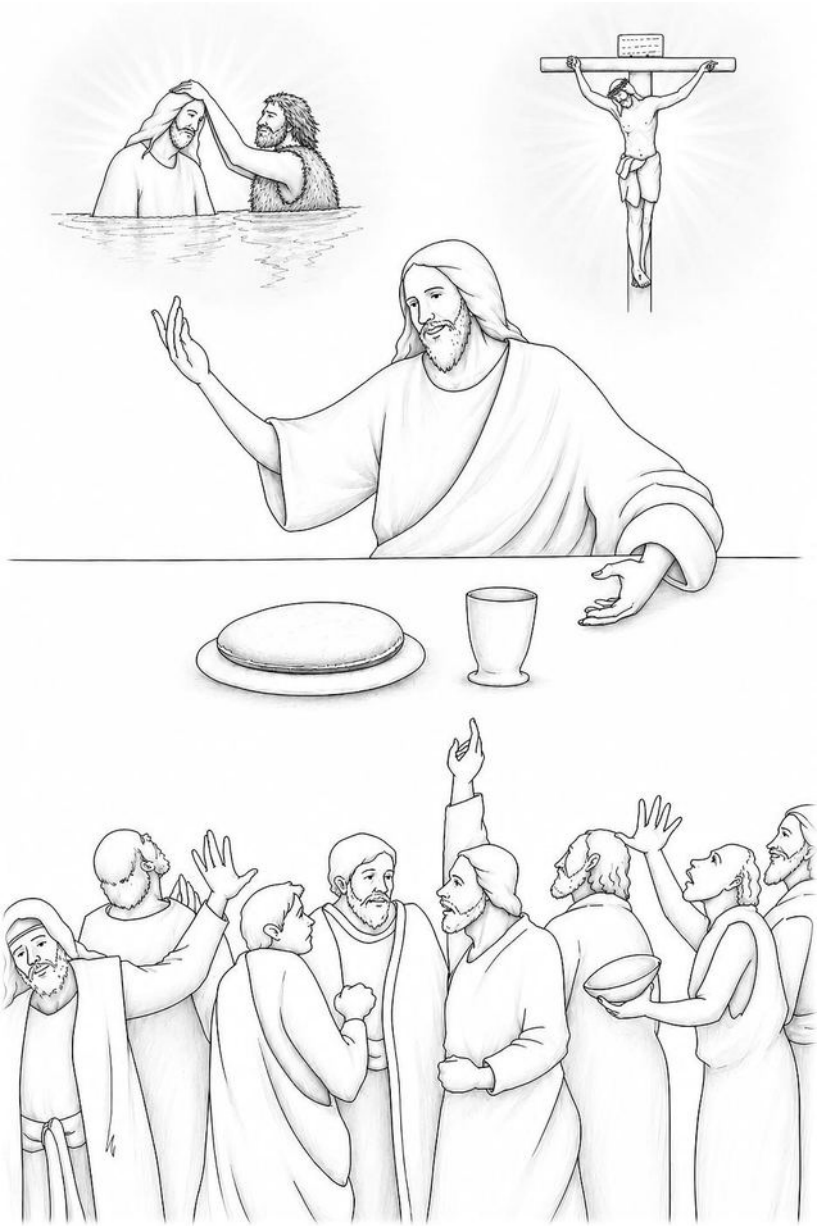

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Luke Chapter 22

Part 1. Understanding the text passage by passage and its gospel-based interpretation

Luke chapter 22 begins with the betrayal of Judas and the last Passover meal, and continues with the dispute among the disciples, the foretelling of Peter's failure, the prayer on the Mount of Olives, and the arrest and interrogation of Jesus. We will examine each text in turn through the general interpretation of its context and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. The betrayal of Judas and the plot of the leaders (22:1–6)

"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude."

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General interpretation of the text

As the Passover draws near, the chief priests and the scribes seek how they might kill Jesus. But because they feared the reaction of the people, they could not arrest Him openly.

Then it is recorded that Satan entered Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples. This means that the power of evil that sought to remove Jesus was at work through Judas' betrayal. Yet this does not mean that Judas bore no responsibility. Judas goes to the leaders, confers on how to betray Jesus to them, and agrees to receive money.

They seek an opportunity to arrest Jesus when the crowd is absent. Hostility toward Jesus, and Judas' greed and betrayal, combine and lead to the event of the Cross.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Even at the Lord's side, one without faith can betray Him

The chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to kill Jesus. At that time Satan entered Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, and after promising to receive money he sought an opportunity to betray Jesus to them.

Judas Iscariot followed Jesus closely for three years. He heard Jesus' words and saw countless miracles. But he did not believe in his heart that Jesus is the Son of God and his own Savior. He loved material things and his own desires more than Jesus, and in the end he became a man whom Satan could use.

The word that Satan entered Judas does not mean that Judas bore no responsibility at all. Following his own greed, he met with the religious leaders and conferred about betraying Jesus.

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Satan uses the greed and unbelief a person harbors to make him oppose the work of God.

The fact that a person is inside the church and has heard many words about the gospel cannot take the place of his own faith. Each person must know and believe with the heart that Jesus is the Savior who took charge of all his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received the judgment for those sins on the Cross. If a person does not believe in Jesus and only puts on a religious outward form, he can, like Judas, oppose the Lord's will even while staying near the Lord.

2. The last Passover meal and the new covenant (22:7–23)

"Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.' So they said to Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare?' And He said to them, 'Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says to you, 'Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?'" Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.' So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover. When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you,

I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!' Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal. Everything happens just as Jesus said, and Jesus sits at the table with His disciples even though He knows the suffering that is coming upon Him.

Jesus says that He will not eat the Passover food again until the kingdom of God is completed. This meal commemorates the event in which Israel was delivered from slavery in Egypt in the past, and at the same time it points to the new salvation that will be accomplished through Jesus' death.

Jesus calls the bread His body and says that it is given for the disciples. He explains that the cup is the new covenant established in His own blood shed for the disciples. Jesus' death is not an accidental sacrifice but a self-giving that saves people and brings them into a new relationship with God.

The word *"do this in remembrance of Me"* is not merely a call to recall a past event; it is a call to believe in Jesus' sacrifice and to live within its meaning.

Yet at the same table there was also one who would betray

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Jesus. The fulfilling of God's plan does not remove the responsibility of the one who betrayed. The disciples begin to ask one another which of them would do such a thing.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The bread and the cup of the Passover show the salvation of Jesus

Jesus had Peter and John prepare the Passover. He told them in advance that when they entered the city they would meet a man carrying a pitcher of water, and that in the house he entered there would be a large upper room made ready. Everything happened just as Jesus had said. This shows that Jesus is God, who knows all that is to come.

At the Passover of the Old Testament, a lamb without blemish died and its blood was put on the doorposts. When God saw that blood, He passed over the judgment that was to fall on that house. This Passover lamb points to Jesus Christ, who would save sinners.

Jesus gave the bread to His disciples and said that it was His own body given for them. The body of Jesus is the body that took charge of all our sins when He received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Though Jesus knew no sin, He was passed all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind.

Jesus gave the cup and said that it was the new covenant established in His own blood. The blood Jesus would shed is the blood of receiving the judgment for our sins, which He had taken charge of through His baptism. The body and the blood of Jesus must not be separated. Jesus gave over to the Cross the body that had taken charge of sin through His baptism, and He shed His

blood as He received the judgment for that sin.

The heart of the new covenant Jeremiah prophesied is that God remits iniquity and remembers that sin no more. The bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper do not automatically wash away sin by themselves. The Lord's Supper makes us remember and testify to the once-for-all salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism and the Cross. The sinner must know this fact of salvation and believe it with the heart.

3. The one who serves is the greatest (22:24–30)

"Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors." But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 'But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

General interpretation of the text

The disciples dispute over which of them is the greatest. Though Jesus' death was drawing near, the disciples were still concerned with power and position.

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Jesus says that the kings of the world rule over their people and have themselves called benefactors, but that it must not be so with the disciples. The greatest must lower himself like the youngest, and the leader must become one who serves.

Jesus was among the disciples as one who serves rather than one who sits at the table and is waited on. Therefore leadership in the church must be shown not in position and privilege but in caring for and serving others after the example of Jesus.

Jesus says that He entrusts the kingdom of God to the disciples who have remained with Him in His trials, and that they will one day eat and drink at His table and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Glory is promised to the disciples, but the way to that glory is the way of service and faithfulness.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The greatest in the kingdom of God serves souls

While Jesus was speaking of giving His own body and blood, the disciples disputed over which of them was the greatest. They were still judging greatness in the kingdom of God by the power and position of the world.

Jesus said that the kings of the world rule over people and love to be exalted, but that it must not be so with the disciples. In the kingdom of God, the one who goes before must become one who serves. Church office and knowledge of the gospel are not means for exalting oneself and ruling over others. They are given so that we may protect weak souls, nourish them with the word, and serve so that the gospel is preached.

Jesus, though the Master of all creation, came as One who serves. Jesus' greatest service was to take charge of our sins and

to receive the judgment of sin in our place, and so to make us the people of God.

Therefore the service of a saved saint is not the price of salvation. It is the person who has already received the remission of sin and eternal life serving the gospel, the church, and souls in gratitude for the Lord's grace. The Lord does not forget the labor of those who served Him and the gospel in the midst of hardship, and He repays it in the kingdom of God. Yet the believer must serve not in order to demand a reward but because he is grateful for the grace received from the Lord.

4. Foretelling Peter's failure and restoration (22:31–38)

"And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' But he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' Then He said, 'I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.' And He said to them, 'When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?' So they said, 'Nothing.' Then He said to them, 'But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." For the things concerning Me have an end.' So they said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' And He said to them, 'It is enough.'"

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General interpretation of the text

Jesus says that Satan has asked to sift the disciples like wheat. This means a severe trial that would shake and tear down the disciples' faith.

Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not completely fail, and He tells him that when he has returned, he is to strengthen the other brothers. Peter declares that he will go with Jesus even to prison and to death, but Jesus foretells that he will deny Him three times before the rooster crows.

Peter fails, but that is not his end. After being restored by Jesus' intercession and grace, he comes to encourage the other disciples as a leader who knows his own weakness.

Unlike at the earlier sending, Jesus now tells them to prepare a money bag and a knapsack. This is a word preparing the disciples to minister in a hostile environment after Jesus' death.

The word about the sword can hardly be taken as a command for armed struggle. In the arrest scene that follows, Jesus stops the disciples' violence and heals the wounded man. The point here is that Jesus and the disciples must prepare for the danger and suffering of being treated like criminals.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must rely on the Lord's word and intercession rather than our own resolve

Jesus knew that Satan intended to test the disciples, to sift them like wheat. But Jesus prayed that Peter's faith would not completely fail, and told him that when he had returned he was to strengthen his brothers.

Peter declared that he would go with Jesus both to prison and

to death. His heart was not false, but he trusted his own will and courage too much. Jesus knew that before the rooster crowed that day, Peter would deny the Lord three times.

The believer must not declare that he himself will never fall. He must rely on the word and the intercession of the Lord who knows his weakness rather than on his own resolve. When he meets a trial, he must not try to endure it alone but pray to God and ask the church and his brothers and sisters to pray as well.

The word of Jesus to prepare a money bag and a knapsack, and for the one without a sword to sell his garment and buy one, must not be interpreted as a command for armed struggle. Immediately afterward, when the disciples actually used a sword, Jesus stopped them and healed the wounded man. This word must be understood to mean that the disciples would now meet severe hostility and persecution, and so must be ready to hold fast the word and their faith even at the cost of sacrifice.

Jesus said that the record, *"He was numbered with the transgressors,"* must be fulfilled in Him. This shows that, as prophesied in Isaiah chapter 53, the sinless Jesus would be treated like one of the criminals and take charge of our sins.

5. Praying on the Mount of Olives (22:39–46)

"Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.' And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.' Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed

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more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, 'Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.'"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives as was His custom, and the disciples follow Him. Jesus tells them to pray that they may not fall into temptation.

Jesus likens the suffering and death coming upon Him to a *"cup"* and prays that, if possible, it may be taken away. Yet He asks that not His own will but the Father's will be done.

This prayer shows that Jesus did not treat His suffering lightly. Even in deep anguish, Jesus entrusted Himself to the will of God. True obedience is not a state without pain but trusting God even in pain.

The disciples fell asleep from sorrow, but Jesus tells them to rise again and pray. The strength to overcome temptation comes not from self-confidence but from prayer that relies on God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The prayer of Gethsemane was a prayer of obedience for salvation

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives according to His custom and prayed. After telling His disciples to pray that they might not enter into temptation, the Lord knelt down a little way off and prayed earnestly.

The cup Jesus had to drink was the cup of the suffering of the Cross and of bearing the judgment for our sins. Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of the world by receiving baptism at the Jordan River. Because the wages of sin is death, He now had to receive the judgment for those sins and shed His blood and die.

That Jesus prayed for this cup to be taken away does not mean that He abandoned the plan of salvation. Because Jesus came as true God and at the same time true man, He actually felt the extreme pain of the Cross. Even so, He did not put His own will first but obeyed the Father's will. After finishing His prayer, He did not avoid those who came to seize Him but went forward on the way of the Cross.

Prayer is not a way of making God's will bend to our own desires. It is telling God our weakness, asking His help, and receiving strength to obey His will. The saved person must pray not only for himself and his family but for the church, for the preaching of the gospel, and for brothers and sisters who are passing through hardship. He must throw away the pride of trusting his own wisdom and will, and always seek God's help so as not to fall into temptation.

6. The arrest of Jesus (22:47–53)

"And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?' When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?' And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus

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answered and said, 'Permit even this.' And He touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.'"

General interpretation of the text

Judas leads a crowd and points out Jesus with a kiss. Originally a kiss was an expression of closeness and respect, but Judas uses it as the signal of betrayal.

The disciples ask whether they should use force, and one of them cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest. But Jesus stops the violence and heals the wounded man's ear.

Jesus points out that though He was in the temple daily, they have come out with swords and clubs as if arresting a robber. They arrest Jesus not in a public place but under the cover of darkness.

Jesus says that this is their hour, the time when the power of darkness is at work. Yet even this moment, when evil seems to triumph, does not ultimately lie outside God's plan of salvation.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Jesus accomplished salvation not by violence but by obedience

Judas Iscariot stood at the head of those who came to seize Jesus and handed the Lord over with a kiss. He used a kiss, a sign of love and respect, as the signal of betrayal. Jesus knew all

of Judas' plan, yet He did not avoid him.

One of the disciples swung a sword and cut off the right ear of the servant of the high priest. But Jesus stopped the disciple's violence and touched and healed the wounded servant's ear. He had compassion even on the enemy who had come to seize Him.

Jesus was not arrested because He lacked power. In the parallel text in Matthew, the Lord said that if He asked the Father, the Father could send more than twelve legions of angels. The Gospel of John also records that when Jesus went out to those who sought Him and identified Himself, they drew back and fell to the ground.

Because Jesus had already taken charge of our sins through His baptism, He allowed His own arrest in order to drink the cup the Father had given. The power of darkness seemed to have won, but through that very event Jesus was accomplishing the salvation that breaks the power of sin and Satan. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel established by human violence and worldly power. It is the gospel of salvation accomplished through Jesus' obedience and sacrifice and spread through the word.

7. Peter denies Jesus (22:54–62)

"Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, 'This man was also with Him.' But he denied Him, saying, 'Woman, I do not know Him.' And after a little while another saw him and said, 'You also are of them.' But Peter said, 'Man,

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I am not!' Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, 'Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are saying!' Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So Peter went out and wept bitterly."

General interpretation of the text

When Jesus is led away to the high priest's house, Peter follows at a distance. While he is warming himself at the fire in the courtyard, a servant girl points him out as one who was with Jesus, but Peter denies it.

Others say the same thing twice more, but Peter repeatedly denies that he knows Jesus. As soon as the third denial ends, the rooster crows.

Then Jesus turns and looks at Peter. Peter remembers the Lord's word that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed, and he goes outside and weeps bitterly.

Peter's tears show the sorrow of a man whose self-confidence has collapsed and who has realized his failure. He failed seriously, but Jesus had already spoken of his restoration. Afterward Peter is raised up again as a disciple who relies not on his own strength but on the grace of Jesus.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The Lord's intercession was greater than Peter's failure

When Jesus was led away to the high priest's house, Peter followed at a distance. While warming himself at the fire among the people, he was pointed out as one who had been with Jesus, and he denied the Lord three times.

The moment Peter denied the third time, the rooster crowed, and Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Only then did Peter remember the Lord's word that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed, and he went outside and wept bitterly.

This event shows how weak man's resolve and will are. Peter had not said that he would die with the Lord in order to lie. But before the fear of death he could not keep his resolve.

Yet Peter's failure did not nullify Jesus' intercession and salvation. Jesus, knowing that Peter would fall, prayed beforehand that his faith would not completely fail. And He entrusted him with the commission to strengthen his brothers when he had returned.

Even a person who has received the remission of sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit can do wrong through the weakness of the flesh. At such a time he must not leave the Lord in his guilt. He must remember the fact that Jesus took charge of that saint's lifelong sins with His baptism and the Cross, acknowledge his wrong, and turn back into the word and the church. Only when he knows that he himself is one restored out of weakness can he embrace the weakness of other brothers and build up their faith.

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8. The mocking and the council's interrogation (22:63–71)

"Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, 'Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?' And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him. As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 'If You are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will by no means believe. And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.' Then they all said, 'Are You then the Son of God?' So He said to them, 'You rightly say that I am.' And they said, 'What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.'"

General interpretation of the text

The men holding Jesus mock Him and beat Him, blindfold Him, and tell Him to guess who struck Him. They insulted Jesus as if to say that if He claimed to be a prophet, He should be able to tell.

When day breaks, the chief priests and the scribes gather in the council and ask Jesus whether He is the Christ. But their question was not to know the truth and believe; it was to obtain grounds for accusing Jesus.

Jesus says that hereafter the Son of Man will sit at the right hand of the power of God. Now He looks like a prisoner under interrogation, but He will be revealed as the One who judges

with the authority of God.

When they ask Jesus whether He is the Son of God, Jesus answers that it is as they say. The leaders take this word as evidence for condemning Him. But the Gospel of Luke shows that the Jesus they condemned is in fact the Son of God and the promised Messiah.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Jesus, who was interrogated, is the Son of God

The men guarding Jesus beat the Lord, blindfolded Him, and mocked Him, telling Him to guess, if He was a prophet, who had struck Him. When day broke, the religious leaders led Jesus into the council and asked whether He was the Christ.

But they did not ask in order to know and believe the truth. They had already determined to kill Jesus and were looking for words with which to condemn Him. Jesus said that even if He told them they would not believe, and that if He asked them they would not answer.

Jesus said that from now on the Son of Man would sit at the right hand of the power of God. He also made plain that He is the Son of God. Though He was seized and mocked by men, Jesus' true identity was the Son of God and the Christ who would sit at the right hand of God and rule the whole world.

Jesus was not interrogated because He had sin. The sinless Son of God was treated like a sinner because He had taken charge of our sins. People condemned Jesus, but through the Cross and the resurrection from death He revealed that He is the true Savior and the Son of God.

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Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 22 conveys

Luke chapter 22 shows that Jesus, knowing everything in advance, went forward on the way of the Cross for our salvation. Jesus took charge of all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. The bread of the last Passover points to the body of Jesus that took charge of those sins, and the cup points to the blood of the new covenant that He would shed as He received the judgment for those sins.

In Gethsemane Jesus set His heart to obey the Father's will. He did not drive off with power those who came to seize Him; He allowed His arrest and endured the mocking and the interrogation. And on the Cross He received the judgment for our sins, and by rising from the dead He completed salvation.

The sinner must not become, like Judas, a person who stays near Jesus and yet does not believe. He must know the salvation Jesus accomplished by the water and the Spirit and believe it with the heart, and so receive the remission of sin.

The person who has received the remission of sin must not boast of his own resolve and ability, as Peter once did. He must rely on the Lord who prays for him and restores him from weakness. Praying always, not quarreling to be higher than others, he must follow Jesus, who served and saved him, and serve the gospel, the church, and souls. ✉

Part 2. An expository sermon
following the text passage by passage

Jesus who gave Himself to accomplish salvation

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 we examined each passage of Luke chapter 22 side by side through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at the salvation of the Passover and the new covenant, at Jesus who came as One who serves, at the prayer needed in the face of trial, and at the grace of the Lord who raises up His weak disciple again.

The betrayal of Judas Iscariot, the last Passover meal, the disciples' dispute over who is the greatest, the prayer of Gethsemane and the arrest, Peter's denial, and the interrogation before the council are not separate events. All these words show that Jesus, though He knew men's betrayal and mockery, gave Himself to save sinners, and that He is the Savior who raises up His falling disciples again with His word and grace.

The expository sermons that follow trace the flow of the text and examine how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took charge of the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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Jesus who went forward to the Cross even amid betrayal

"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude" (Luke 22:1–6).

When Jesus had finished speaking about Jerusalem and the last days, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called Passover, was drawing near. Many people had gathered in Jerusalem and were preparing the Passover, but at that very time the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to kill Jesus, whom God had sent. Outwardly they were keeping the holy feast, while in their hearts they were rejecting the Son of God, who would accomplish the true salvation of the feast.

"For they feared the people"

Jesus had been teaching the word of God in the temple and exposing the hypocrisy, the greed, and the unbelief of the religious leaders. But before the word they did not acknowledge their sin; to protect their own authority and interests they sought to remove Jesus. Since the people were gathered to hear Jesus' word, they could not seize Him openly and looked for a time when the crowds were absent. They feared the response of the people and their own position more than God, who sees their

hearts. Religious office and outward form can never take the place of a heart that believes God.

"Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve"

Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples. Judas had heard Jesus' words directly, had seen His mighty works, and had ministered together with the other disciples. But his final choice and conduct revealed that he had not believed with his heart the word and the salvation Jesus preached. The outward position of having been near Jesus and bearing the name of a disciple did not save him.

The Gospel of John records that Judas kept the money box and used to take what was put in it. Even while following Jesus, he did not put away the love of money and the greed in his heart. His heart, which followed material things and the thoughts of the flesh rather than the word, at last became a channel through which Satan worked.

The word *"Satan entered"* shows that Judas came under the powerful working of Satan. Yet it was Judas himself who went to the chief priests and captains, conferred on how to betray Jesus, accepted the promise of money, and sought an opportunity to betray Him when the multitude was absent. The religious leaders were glad when Jesus' own disciple came to them as a betrayer, and Judas chose the way of handing Jesus over, following his greed and unbelief. The unbelief in his heart passed through secret consultation and appeared in the actual deed of betrayal.

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Even the wicked plot could not stop God's plan of salvation

Yet the wicked plot of Judas and the religious leaders could not overthrow God's plan of salvation. Jesus knew all about the betrayal, the arrest, and the death that were coming upon Him, and according to the Father's will to save sinners He went forward voluntarily on the way of the Cross. God overcame the evil of men and accomplished His purpose of saving mankind. Judas and the religious leaders must answer before God for the sins of betrayal and murder they committed.

The Passover was the feast that proclaimed God's salvation—escaping the judgment of death and receiving life. As the true Savior of the Passover, Jesus had already taken charge of the sins of all the people of the world on His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Now the time was drawing near for Him to carry those sins and die on the Cross, shedding His blood and receiving the sinner's punishment in his place, and to rise in three days and triumph over sin and death. Jesus' death was not a defeat suffered for lack of power but a righteous death in which He voluntarily gave His own body and life to save sinners.

Today we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. Jesus took charge of all our sins with His baptism, received all the punishment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, becoming a child of God.

The figure of Judas Iscariot shows that one is not saved by the outward conditions of hearing the gospel at close range and holding office in the church. A person must believe with the

heart the gospel that Jesus took charge of the sin of the world with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and rose again. If a person knows the word and calls on the Lord with his lips while serving money, honor, and his own desires as master, he ends up using even Jesus and the church as means for his own gain.

The person who has received the remission of sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit brings the greed, the ambition, and the thoughts of the flesh that rise within him out into the light of the word and keeps his heart. He does not serve money as master but uses the material things God has entrusted to him for the needs of his family and for serving the church, the gospel, and souls. When he receives the guidance of a church that preaches the word rightly and lives following the Holy Spirit, he can drive off Satan's deception and serve Jesus and the gospel faithfully.

Luke chapter 22 verses 1–6 show that the religious leaders who were preparing the holy feast sought to kill the Son of God, and that Judas, one of the twelve disciples, betrayed Him for money. But Jesus, knowing all that betrayal, carried the sin of the world He had taken on through His baptism, went to the Cross, died, and rose again, completing salvation. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not follow greed and the thoughts of the flesh as Judas did; he keeps his heart in the word and the Spirit, and believes and serves Jesus who saved him and His gospel.

Jesus who prepared the Passover according to His word

"Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying,

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'Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.' So they said to Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare?' And He said to them, 'Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says to you, 'Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?'" Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.' So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover" (Luke 22:7–13).

The Passover preparation fulfilled exactly as He had spoken

When the Day of Unleavened Bread arrived, on which the Passover lamb must be killed, Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover for Him and the disciples to eat. Just before this, Judas Iscariot had been conferring with the religious leaders on how to hand Jesus over. But Jesus was not dragged about by the plot of betrayal. Knowing fully the time and the way of the salvation He would accomplish, He prepared the Passover according to His word.

Peter and John asked where they should prepare the Passover. Jesus said that when they entered the city they would meet a man carrying a pitcher of water, and that they were to follow him into the house he entered. If they asked the master of the house where the guest room was in which the Teacher might eat the Passover with His disciples, he would show them a large, furnished upper room; there, He said, they were to make ready.

Jesus knew exactly the man, the house, and the prepared room that were not yet visible to the disciples' eyes. When the

disciples went into the city, everything happened just as Jesus had said. They met the man carrying a pitcher of water, and they prepared the Passover in the large upper room the master of the house showed them. There was no error in Jesus' word, and what the Lord had spoken appeared in reality just as it was.

Jesus who knew all things and went forward to the Cross

This event shows that Jesus is not merely a man but God, who knows all things and has the power to do them. Jesus knew not only the man carrying the pitcher of water and the large upper room, but also Judas Iscariot's betrayal, Peter's denial, His own arrest and suffering, and His death on the Cross and resurrection. No future was hidden from Him.

Therefore the Cross of Jesus was not a defeat in which He was caught because He did not know what lay ahead. Jesus, knowing all that would happen to Him, went forward voluntarily on the way of the Cross according to the Father's will to save sinners. The evil design of Judas and the religious leaders could not stop the salvation the Lord was accomplishing. Jesus, the God of power, ruled over every circumstance and fulfilled the word of salvation.

The Passover was the feast that remembered God's salvation, when the judgment of death passed over and the people of Israel were freed from slavery in Egypt. Now Jesus would eat this Passover with His disciples and accomplish the true salvation of the Passover, saving mankind lying under sin and judgment. In the next passage the Lord shares the bread and the cup and speaks of the salvation of the new covenant, in which He gives His body and sheds His blood.

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At the time of this text, Jesus had already taken charge of the sins of all the people of the world on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. He now stood before the time when He would carry those sins, hang on the Cross, shed His blood and die, receiving the judgment of sin, and rise from the dead in three days to complete salvation. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit, and is set free from the slavery of sin and death.

The saint who believes and obeys the Lord's word

Peter and John did not move only after they had understood everything ahead and completed their own plans. They heard Jesus' word and went into the city. When they walked according to the word, they met the man and the house and the room the Lord had spoken of. Faith is not knowing everything in advance oneself; it is believing Jesus, who knows all things, and obeying His word one step at a time.

Because man cannot know everything that lies ahead, he easily worries and leans on his own devices. But Jesus is God, who knows the beginning and the end. The believer does not judge or correct the word by his own thoughts; he believes the written word and asks help of the Lord who knows what is ahead. As he goes forward step by step along the word in faith, he experiences the Lord's guidance and power.

The master of the house gave up his large upper room, made ready so that Jesus and the disciples could eat the Passover, and Peter and John prepared there what was needed. In the same way, in the church and in the work of the gospel, the saints bear their

appointed tasks in different places. One offers a place and material things, another prepares what is needed, another preaches the word and serves souls. When all are united in the word of the Lord, the work of the gospel is accomplished beautifully.

The born-again person does not put off obedience until every condition is in place; he believes the Lord's word and prepares the work entrusted to him. This is not merit for obtaining salvation but the fruit of faith, by which one who has first been saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit serves the Lord.

Luke chapter 22 verses 7–13 show that Jesus is the God of power who knows all things exactly, and that the disciples prepared the Passover according to His word. The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit relies on the Lord's word rather than on his own thoughts and worries, and prepares and serves the work of the gospel entrusted to him in faith.

Jesus who established the new covenant with His body and blood

"When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do

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this in remembrance of Me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!' Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing" (Luke 22:14–23).

The Passover table He desired before His suffering

Jesus sat down at the Passover table with the apostles in the large upper room that had been prepared. The Lord said, *"With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."* He knew fully that the suffering of the Cross was near, yet He did not avoid it. Rather, He earnestly desired to share this table with His disciples and teach them what salvation He would accomplish.

Jesus said that He would not eat this Passover again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and shared it with the disciples, saying that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine again until the kingdom of God comes. This Passover meal turned their eyes toward the salvation that would soon be accomplished through Jesus' body and blood, and showed the hope of enjoying the full joy and glory of that salvation in the coming kingdom of God.

The new covenant established with His own body and blood

Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the

disciples, saying, *"This is My body which is given for you."* The Son of God put on a human body and came into the world in order to serve and save sinners in person. Jesus came in an actual human body, went through hunger and weariness and men's contempt, and bore with His own body all the labor of salvation.

In the word *"My body which is given for you"* is contained the sacrifice Jesus took upon Himself in person to save us. Jesus had received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and taken charge of the sins of all the people of the world; and carrying those sins He would receive insult and scourging and the death of the Cross. The bread teaches the love and the labor of the Lord, who gave His own body for sinners.

Jesus said, *"Do this in remembrance of Me."* Whenever the disciples broke the bread, they were to remember the fact that the Lord had given His body for them. At the Lord's Supper the believer remembers the history of salvation—that Jesus came in a human body, took charge of sin with His baptism, and gave Himself over to the Cross. To engrave on the heart the salvation He actually accomplished and to receive it in faith is to remember the Lord rightly.

After supper Jesus gave the cup again, saying, *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."* If the cup shared earlier turned their eyes to the Passover meal and to the coming kingdom of God, the cup after supper plainly proclaims the new covenant that would be established by Jesus' blood. The blood Jesus would shed on the Cross is the blood of receiving, in our place, the judgment for the sins of mankind that He had taken charge of through His baptism.

The wages of sin is death, and judgment always follows sin. Because Jesus had received our sins onto His own body through the baptism at the Jordan River, He carried those sins and shed

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His blood and died on the Cross. Since the Son of God received the punishment the sinner had to receive, the price of all sin was paid in full. The blood of Jesus is the proof of salvation that He received all the judgment for the sins He had taken charge of through His baptism.

The new covenant is God's promise of salvation to give complete remission of sin to the one who believes the righteousness of God that Jesus completed with His own body and blood. At the time He spoke this word, the baptism had already taken place, and the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection were about to be accomplished. Today, whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit, becoming one of God's people.

The salvation Jesus accomplished is not a notion or a theory. The Son of God came in an actual human body, took charge of our sins with His baptism, died on the Cross, and rose again. Whoever believes with the heart the salvation He accomplished in person within history receives the remission of all sins once and for all and obtains eternal life.

"The Son of Man goes as it has been determined"

But Jesus said that the hand of His betrayer was with Him on the table. Judas Iscariot bore the name of an apostle, sat at the same table with Jesus, and heard the word of salvation directly. Yet he chose the way of betrayal, following money and his own desires. The outward position of having been near the table of salvation could not take the place of a heart that believes the gospel.

Jesus said, *"The Son of Man goes as it has been determined,*

but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" Jesus went to the Cross voluntarily, following the will of salvation the Father had appointed. His death was the work of salvation according to God's determination. At the same time, Judas sold Jesus by his own will, following his own desires, and so had to bear the responsibility for that betrayal. God overcame the evil of man and accomplished salvation.

The disciples asked one another who among them would do this thing. What matters is not the name of apostle or the outward form of partaking of the Lord's Supper, but believing with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel obtains the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit within the completed righteousness of God.

The person who believes in Jesus, who gave His own body and blood, shows that love in his life. Since the Lord served us with His own body, the saint also serves the church, the gospel, and souls with his body, his time, and his substance. He does not sit in a high place seeking only to be served; he preaches the gospel to those not yet saved and cares for weak brothers and sisters. Such service is not the price of salvation but the fruit of faith flowing from the love and the remission of sin received from the Lord.

Luke chapter 22 verses 14–23 show the scene in which Jesus spoke of giving His own body and blood to save sinners and of establishing the new covenant. The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit engraves this salvation on his heart, serves the church and the gospel and souls following the Lord who served him, and hopes for the kingdom of God that will be revealed in fullness.

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Jesus who served and upheld His disciples

"Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors." But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 'But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' But he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' Then He said, 'I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.'" (Luke 22:24–34).

Jesus who came as One who serves

Immediately after Jesus spoke of giving His own body and blood to accomplish the salvation of the new covenant, a dispute arose among the disciples over which of them was the greatest. Jesus was going to the Cross to serve sinners, but the disciples were thinking of high places and power. Even a person who hears the gospel, if he follows the thoughts of the flesh, can have

his heart stolen by the work of exalting his own name and position rather than serving.

Jesus said that the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over their people and that those in power receive the title of benefactors. The power of the world seeks to sit in high places, to rule over others, and to receive honor and service. But Jesus said plainly to His disciples, *"Not so among you."* In the kingdom of God the greatest must work diligently like the younger, and the leader and the one who goes before must serve the saints and souls. The office and authority given to a leader of the church are not a means of building his own glory but the responsibility of serving—leading and guarding the saints with the word and bringing souls to life.

In the world, the one who sits at the table and eats looks greater than the one who waits on him. But Jesus, the King of kings, said, *"I am among you as the One who serves."* The Son of God, the Creator, put on the body of a man and came to this earth to serve sinners. The Lord taught with the word and cared for the sick and the weak, and at last He gave His own body and life to save us from sin.

The greatest work by which Jesus served us is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world—including the sin of denial Peter would commit—on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Carrying those sins, He hung on the Cross, shed His blood and died, receiving all the judgment, and then rose from the dead, completing salvation. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The person who has received this grace follows the Lord who saved him and serves the church, the gospel, and souls.

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The kingdom of God promised to the faithful saint

Jesus promised to bestow His kingdom on the disciples who had continued with Him in His trials, just as the Father had bestowed a kingdom on Him. The disciples will eat and drink at His table in His kingdom and sit judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This is the promise of grace that God remembers the labor of those who endured hardship with the Lord and served the gospel, and repays them in His kingdom.

The saved person is not a hired worker who labors to extract a reward. Having already received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit and eternal life freely, he serves voluntarily out of gratitude to the Lord who saved him. The reward and the ruling of the kingdom of God are not a price by which human merit buys salvation, but the reward of love the Lord adds to the saint who has been faithful according to the grace received.

The Lord who prayed for Peter, who would fall

Jesus then called Peter repeatedly, *"Simon, Simon!"* Satan had asked to sift the disciples like wheat, to shake them off from faith. As grain is shaken violently to divide the wheat from the chaff, Satan sought to stir up fear and confusion so that the disciples would abandon Jesus. Even Peter, so strong in self-assurance, would have his weakness exposed before this trial.

But Jesus prayed for Peter, that his faith would not fail. The Lord's prayer was fulfilled as grace that kept Peter, even in his failure, from losing his faith completely, so that he turned back and relied on the Lord again. After denying Jesus three times, Peter realized his weakness and returned, and afterward he was raised up as a worker who strengthened the faith of the other brothers.

Peter declared, *"Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."* He had a heart that loved the Lord, but he did not know how weak his own flesh was. Jesus knew exactly that before the rooster crowed he would deny the Lord three times. Since man's strong resolve and feeling can collapse before trial, the believer must rely not on his own will but on the Lord's word and prayer and the help of the Holy Spirit.

What turned Peter back and raised him up was the complete remission of sin the Lord had bestowed and the prayer and grace with which He held him. Jesus had already taken charge, through His baptism, even of the sin of denial Peter would commit, and He would soon receive the full judgment for that sin on the Cross. Peter came to know his weakness deeply, and within the Lord's grace he could rise again.

The word *"when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren"* is the word by which the Lord did not cast off the failed Peter but entrusted him with his commission again. Peter, whose self-assurance had collapsed and who had been restored by the Lord's grace, became a man who could understand weak brothers and hold them up with the word. The comfort and the grace of restoration one has received lead on to the service of raising up a falling brother and making his faith firm.

Today the believer also must not overtrust his own will and loyalty but rely on the word, on prayer, and on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Within the church of faith we must look after one another and hold one another so as not to fall into temptation. When we have fallen, we must believe again the gospel that all our sins have already been removed by Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and upon that complete remission of sin renew our hearts and return to the way of the gospel.

Luke chapter 22 verses 24–34 teach that the great one in the kingdom of God is the one who serves, and that the saint's faith

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is kept not by his own ability but by the Lord's prayer and grace. The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not seek his own exaltation but serves the church and souls; even in failure he believes the completed gospel, rises again, and with the grace he has received strengthens his weak brothers and sisters.

Jesus who went to the Cross numbered with the transgressors

"And He said to them, 'When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?' So they said, 'Nothing.' Then He said to them, 'But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." For the things concerning Me have an end.' So they said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' And He said to them, 'It is enough.'" (Luke 22:35–38).

"Did you lack anything?"

After telling Peter that he would deny Him three times, Jesus taught the disciples about the circumstances they would soon face and the preparation of faith they would need. When He had sent the disciples out earlier on their journey of preaching, He had them go without money bag, knapsack, or sandals. The disciples took nothing with them then, yet they lacked nothing. The Lord who sent them supplied what was needed, and through

the service of those who received the gospel they were given food and lodging as well. The disciples learned the faith of relying on the Lord who sent them rather than on the things they possessed.

But now the time was drawing near for Jesus to be seized and hung on the Cross. If people rejected Jesus, the disciples too would meet hatred and persecution rather than welcome. Jesus' word to prepare a money bag and a knapsack means that in the changed circumstances they were to equip responsibly what the preaching of the gospel required and endure hardship. The person who believes God's supply also bears in faith the preparation and labor entrusted to him.

"He who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one"

Jesus said that the one who has no sword should sell even his garment and buy one. The garment was a precious necessity of life that protected the body from the cold of night. In the word to sell even that and buy a sword lies the meaning that the time had come to pay the price of sacrifice for the gospel. The sword the Lord told His disciples to equip is not a weapon that harms people but the word of God and the faith that believes that word. The disciples had to receive the written word into their hearts and possess it as their own faith, even at the cost of laying down comfort and their own advantage.

The event that followed shows the Lord's meaning still more plainly. When a disciple swung an actual sword and wounded the ear of the servant of the high priest, Jesus stopped the act and healed the wounded ear. Jesus did not protect Himself by the power of the sword, nor did He establish the kingdom of God by

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the world's force. The preparation the Lord wanted was the spiritual preparation of believing the word and overcoming even when suffering and persecution strike, without abandoning the gospel. The gospel is not spread by weapons that take men's lives but by the word of truth that brings sinners to life.

The disciples understood Jesus' word as a literal sword and answered, *"Lord, look, here are two swords."* But with two swords they could neither overcome the coming persecution nor preach the gospel to the whole world. The sword Jesus spoke of is the word of God and the faith that believes it. The saint must receive the word into his heart and make it his own even at a cost, and overcome trial and persecution not by man's devices and strength but by the living word.

"He was numbered with the transgressors"

Jesus said that the record, *"He was numbered with the transgressors,"* must be fulfilled in Him. Jesus, who had no sin at all, would be arrested and condemned like a sinner and hung on the Cross with criminals. People treated Him like a transgressor, but Jesus knew everything that would happen to Him; He said, *"The things concerning Me have an end"* and walked voluntarily the written way of salvation.

Jesus' arrest and Cross are the event in which God, who knows all things, gave Himself voluntarily to fulfill the written word and save sinners. At the time of this text, Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of the world on His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Now He would carry those sins, be numbered with the transgressors, shed His blood and die on the Cross, and rise in three days. Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and

His resurrection are the one righteousness of God that took charge of the sin of the world, judged it, and completely saved the sinner.

Today we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. Jesus took charge of all our sins with His baptism, received all the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. Since the Lord paid the price of sin completely, the believer does not try to pay for his sins again with his own deeds and sufferings, but believes the completed righteousness of God and obtains eternal life.

The saint who has received the remission of sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes, even in hardship, that the word of God lives and works and that the salvation the Lord accomplished does not change. The saved person prepares faithfully what life and ministry require, prays to God who knows every circumstance, and relies on the Lord's supply in union with the church. Even when he must lay down comfort and his own advantage, he keeps the truth; he does not meet the world's hostility with violence and revenge, but preaches the gospel that brings life.

Luke chapter 22 verses 35–38 show that Jesus, knowing all that would happen to Him, went forward to the Cross to fulfill the written salvation. The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit trusts the Lord's supply and, even at the cost of sacrifice, possesses the written word by faith and preaches to the end the gospel that brings life.

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Jesus who obeyed the Father's will

"Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.' And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.' Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, 'Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.'" (Luke 22:39–46).

"Pray that you may not enter into temptation"

After the last supper Jesus went to the Mount of Olives according to His custom. He did not suddenly pray only on the special night before the Cross; He had always prayed to the Father. Even when the greatest suffering drew near, Jesus went to His accustomed place of prayer, and the disciples followed Him.

When He came to the Mount of Olives, Jesus said to the disciples, *"Pray that you may not enter into temptation."* After He returned from His prayer He gave the same command again. In a little while, when Jesus was arrested, the disciples would scatter in fear and Peter would deny the Lord three times. Since they could not overcome the coming trial by their own resolve and will alone, Jesus told them to seek God's protection and help

before the great hardship arrived.

To pray that we may not enter into temptation is the faith that looks ahead at the coming danger and one's own weakness and asks God for help. Man does not know when or what hardship he will meet. We must entrust to God the things that could tear down our life of faith, our home, our workplace, our church, and the preaching of the gospel, and pray that He will protect us from falling into too great a trial and give us the wisdom and strength to bear it.

"Not My will, but Yours, be done"

Jesus knelt down and prayed at about a stone's throw from the disciples. Prayer is the act of faith that offers the heart to God and asks the help that is needed. Even Jesus, the Son of God, prayed in the human body He had put on, communing with the Father and obeying His will completely.

The words *"this cup"* point to the suffering of the Cross, death, and the judgment of sin that were soon to come. Because Jesus was true God and at the same time true man, He had to actually go through the pain of the scourge, the nails, the shedding of blood, and death. The One without any sin had to carry the sin of the world He had taken on through His baptism and receive in the sinner's place the judgment the sinner deserved. The petition *"take this cup away from Me"* shows that His suffering was not a formality but pain Jesus actually bore in body and heart.

Yet Jesus' prayer did not end as a demand that only His own will be done. Jesus prayed, *"Not My will, but Yours, be done."* It was the prayer that if the Cross was the Father's will for saving sinners, He would obey that will. Jesus is the Son of God, who

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gave Himself voluntarily according to the Father's will to save us.

The angel who appeared from heaven strengthened Jesus. The Father gave Him the strength to bear His will to the end. Jesus, in agony, prayed more earnestly, giving His whole heart until His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground. Through that prayer Jesus obeyed the Father's will, and He did not avoid those who came to seize Him but went forward on the way of the Cross.

The reason Jesus prayed so earnestly is that He had already taken charge of all the sins of the world by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist. Now He had to carry those sins, hang on the Cross, and shed His blood and die, receiving the judgment of sin. To take charge of sin through His baptism, to pay the price of sin with the blood and death of the Cross, and then to rise again—this was the Father's appointed will of salvation.

At the time of this text, Jesus' baptism had already taken place, and the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection were about to be accomplished. Jesus obeyed the Father's will to the end, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose in three days, completing salvation. Today, whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit, becoming a child of God. Prayer is not the price of salvation; it is the life of faith in which a child of God who has received the remission of sin relies on the Father's help.

"Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation"

When Jesus finished praying and returned to His disciples, they were sleeping from sorrow. Their hearts were heavy from

the Lord's words about His suffering and death, but through the weakness of the flesh they failed to watch and pray. Peter had declared that he would go with the Lord both to prison and to death, yet he did not pray, and when the actual trial struck he denied the Lord. Man's good will and strong resolve alone cannot overcome spiritual trial.

Jesus did not abandon the sleeping disciples; He woke them again and said, *"Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."* Even the saint who has received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit lives in the flesh in this world and needs God's help. We must pray for our own weakness, for our homes and workplaces, for the church and the workers of the gospel, and seek in advance the Lord's protection and guidance so that hardship does not tear down our faith and the preaching of the gospel.

True prayer is the faith that tells the Father honestly the needs of the heart while entrusting oneself to His will. The believer prays earnestly to be spared suffering and danger, and if he must pass through that road, he asks for the strength to bear it and the faith to obey. He also intercedes with all his heart for brothers and sisters, for the church, for the work of the gospel, and for lost souls.

Luke chapter 22 verses 39–46 show how earnestly Jesus prayed, in agony, with the cup of the Cross before Him. Jesus obeyed the Father's will rather than His own in order to receive on the Cross the judgment for all our sins He had taken on through His baptism, and by death and resurrection He completed salvation. The saint who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit firmly trusts the salvation the Lord accomplished, watches and prays so as not to fall into temptation, and in every circumstance serves the gospel following the Father's will.

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Jesus who gave Himself up before the power of darkness

"And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?' When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, 'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?' And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, 'Permit even this.' And He touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.'" (Luke 22:47–53).

"Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

While Jesus was telling the disciples to pray that they might not enter into temptation, Judas Iscariot drew near at the head of a crowd. As one of the twelve disciples he had seen Jesus' words and ministry at close range, yet he did not believe that word in his heart, and now he had become the guide of those who came to seize the Lord. It is not the name of disciple or the outward place near the gospel that saves a person, but the faith that believes with the heart the gospel Jesus accomplished.

Judas tried to point out with a kiss the One to be arrested. He used a kiss, the sign of love and closeness, as the signal of betrayal. Jesus asked, *"Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"* and exposed his hypocrisy and betrayal. The Lord

knew all of Judas' plan and the arrest that was about to take place. Knowing everything, Jesus gave Himself up to fulfill the will of salvation.

"Permit even this"

When the crowd drew near, the disciples asked, *"Lord, shall we strike with the sword?"* and one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. The disciples had misunderstood as an actual weapon the sword Jesus had spoken of before. What Jesus wanted was that they hold fast the word of God by faith, even at the cost of sacrifice.

Jesus said, *"Permit even this"* and stopped the disciples' use of force. The Lord did not protect Himself with the sword or escape arrest by the disciples' strength. The kingdom of God is not built by force that wounds people and compels them to submit. The gospel of the water and the Spirit, which brings sinners to life, is spread by the word of God, by faith, and by love.

Jesus touched and healed the ear of the servant of the high priest, who was with the crowd that had come to seize Him. Even at the moment of being taken by His enemies, He healed the wounded man. The disciple, trying to protect the Lord by his own strength, wounded a man; but Jesus restored that wound. This shows the love of Jesus, who, unlike the way of the world that preserves itself by sacrificing others, gave His own body and life to bring sinners to life.

"This is your hour, and the power of darkness"

Jesus asked the chief priests, the captains of the temple, and

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the elders why they had come out to seize Him with swords and clubs, as against a robber. Jesus had taught openly in the temple every day; He had raised no riot and harmed no one. Yet they, fearing the people, came in the dark hour with an armed crowd and arrested the sinless Jesus like a criminal. Their conduct was injustice born of unbelief and fear.

The word *"this is your hour, and the power of darkness"* shows that behind Judas' betrayal and the leaders' intent to kill, the dark working of Satan was moving. Judas and the leaders handed over and seized Jesus following their own greed and unbelief, and so they are responsible for that sin. Jesus knew all their plans, and to fulfill the Father's appointed will of salvation He gave His body over at His own hour.

The sinless Jesus was arrested like a robber by the unjust judgment of men. At the same time, within God's plan of salvation, Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of the world on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Now the time was approaching for Him to carry those sins, hang on the Cross, shed His blood and die, receiving in the sinner's place the judgment the sinner deserved, and to rise in three days and triumph over sin and death and the power of darkness.

Today, whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and is moved out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of God.

Salvation is the grace received by believing the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished by giving His own body. The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not wound people or force them to submit in the name of defending the truth. Holding fast the word of God and faith, with the heart of Jesus who pitied even His enemies, he

cares for wounded souls and preaches the gospel that brings life.

The night Jesus was arrested looked like the hour when darkness prevailed, but through that road the atonement of the Cross and the victory of the resurrection were accomplished. God went beyond men's schemes and completed His will of salvation. The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes the Lord's word rather than the dark circumstances before his eyes, and to the end preaches, not with violence and hatred but with faith and love, the gospel that brings sinners to life.

Jesus who raised Peter up again

"Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, 'This man was also with Him.' But he denied Him, saying, 'Woman, I do not know Him.' And after a little while another saw him and said, 'You also are of them.' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not!' Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, 'Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are saying!' Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So Peter went out and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:54–62).

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"Peter followed at a distance"

The crowd that seized Jesus led Him away to the high priest's house. Peter, who a little before had declared that he would go with the Lord both to prison and to death, followed Jesus at a distance. He could not leave the Lord altogether, but for fear that he too might be seized he could not draw near. He had a heart that loved the Lord, but the fear of preserving his own life also held him fast.

When the people kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat together, Peter also sat among them. A servant girl, looking intently at Peter in the light of the fire, said, *"This man was also with Him."* Then Peter denied his relationship with Jesus, saying, *"Woman, I do not know Him."* He had not yet been questioned by an armed soldier or a judge, yet he yielded to fear before the word of a single person.

A little later, when another said that Peter also belonged to Jesus' company, he denied it again: *"I am not!"* About an hour later, when yet another confidently affirmed that Peter, being a Galilean, had surely been with Jesus, he denied a third time, saying that he did not even know what the man was talking about. The first denial, that he did not know Jesus, led to the second, that he did not belong to that company, and reached at last the third, which tried to hide every tie with the Lord.

"The Lord turned and looked at Peter"

Peter fell like this because he trusted his own will and resolve too much. Though he heard in Gethsemane the word to pray that he might not enter into temptation, he slept; and when the actual trial struck, he could not keep his own declaration. By man's will

and ability alone, no one can follow the Lord to the end. We must lay down our own strength and believe the word that the Lord saves us and holds us.

At the very moment Peter denied the third time, the rooster crowed. It happened exactly as Jesus had said: *"Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."* Peter did not fully know his own heart and weakness, but Jesus, who knows all things, already knew how he would fall. Man's confidence and declarations collapse, but the word the Lord has spoken is fulfilled exactly.

When the Lord turned and looked at Peter, Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken. The Lord's word laid bare his declaration and his actual state. Peter went outside and wept bitterly. He realized that though he had said he would die with the Lord, he had denied Him three times before fear, and he grieved deeply. His weeping was the deep sorrow of realizing that the Lord's word was right and that trusting himself had been wrong.

"When you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren"

Even after Peter's failure, Jesus held him and had him fulfill the commission entrusted to him. Knowing already that Satan sought to sift the disciples like wheat, He had prayed that Peter's faith would not fail. And by saying, *"When you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren,"* He even told him in advance that he would fall, return, and come to build up the other brothers. What kept Peter's faith was not his strong will but the grace of Jesus, who prayed for him and held him.

Jesus had already taken charge, at the Jordan River when He

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received baptism from John the Baptist, even of the sin of the three denials Peter would commit. He took them on knowing Peter's weakness and failure and all the sins of his whole life. At the time of this text, Jesus stood before the hour when He would carry those sins, hang on the Cross, shed His blood and die, receiving all the judgment of sin, and rise in three days to complete the salvation of Peter and of all who believe.

The risen Jesus sought Peter out and asked him three times, *"Do you love Me?"* and entrusted him with the charge, *"Feed My sheep."* Jesus had Peter believe the love that had taken even his sins on through His baptism and borne the responsibility for them in the death of the Cross. Peter rose again by believing the grace of Jesus, who had taken charge of all his sins and loved him to the end.

Today, all the lifelong sins of the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit passed on to Jesus through His baptism and were judged on the Cross. Though the saint stumbles in weakness, the salvation Jesus completed does not change. The believer acknowledges his wrong before the word, believes the gospel that took charge even of that sin, and turns his heart back. The one who knows the grace of complete remission of sin gives thanks for the love of the Lord who bore responsibility for him to the end, and lives again by faith.

The saint must live with the faith that says, "The Lord saves me, holds me, and leads me." He must pray not to enter into temptation, keep the word in his heart, and receive help in union with the church. When he has failed, he must not be pressed down by shame and drift further from the Lord, but return to Jesus, who took charge of all our sins. The Lord raises up again the one who returns, and has him strengthen weak brothers with the comfort and grace he has received.

Luke chapter 22 verses 54–62 show how easily man's strong

resolve collapses and how exact the word of Jesus, who knows all things, is. Peter trusted his own strength and denied the Lord three times, but he remembered the Lord's word and realized his true state. Jesus took charge even of that sin through His baptism, was judged with the blood of the Cross, and rose again, raising Peter up once more. The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit trusts the Lord who saves and holds him to the end; when he falls, he turns back through the word and the gospel and lives as one who strengthens his brothers.

Jesus who endured mocking and went on to the Cross

"Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, 'Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?' And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him" (Luke 22:63–65).

"The men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him"

After Peter denied Jesus three times and went out and wept bitterly, the men who were holding Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. Jesus had not yet been interrogated before the council, nor was He a man whose guilt had been established. Yet they insulted and battered the captive Jesus as they pleased. Their treatment of the sinless Son of God as a criminal lays bare the injustice and cruelty of man.

They blindfolded Jesus, struck Him, and mocked Him, saying, *"Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?"* If He was

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a prophet, they meant, He should tell without seeing who had hit Him. Jesus is the almighty God who knows who struck Him, and Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial, His own arrest, and His death on the Cross. Jesus did not display His power to force men to submit; He endured the insult to fulfill the Father's will of salvation.

Besides this, they spoke many other insults against Jesus. They did not acknowledge Jesus as the prophet and the Christ sent by God, and they ridiculed His word and His authority. It was Jesus whose bodily eyes were covered, but it was they who were spiritually blind. Though they saw Jesus before their eyes, they failed to recognize God, who had come to save them.

Jesus had just healed the severed ear of the servant of the high priest, and He was the almighty God who knew all that would befall Him. He walked the road of suffering voluntarily, obeying the Father's will to bring sinners to life.

He endured insult to save us

At the time of this text, Jesus had already taken charge of the sins of all the people of the world on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. The mocking and beating men inflicted were their own wicked crime, yet Jesus endured that unjust suffering and, carrying the sins He had taken on through His baptism, went on toward the Cross. He bore the judgment of sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and in three days He rose, triumphing over sin and death and completing salvation.

Today we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. The sinless Son of God took

charge of our sins on His own body and received all their judgment in our place. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart is saved from all sin and condemnation, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes a child of God.

Jesus is the almighty God who pitied sinners and saved them. The saint must believe for whose sins the Lord received this suffering. When we believe the fact that Jesus took charge of our very own sins with His baptism and ended their judgment on the Cross, the Lord's suffering is received into our hearts as the grace of salvation.

The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit may also suffer mocking and insult because of the Lord's name and the gospel. The saved person endures with the word of God and faith and preaches the gospel that brings life. Just as the victory of the Cross and the resurrection followed the insult Jesus received, so the labor and reproach borne for the gospel are never in vain before God.

Luke chapter 22 verses 63–65 show the injustice of men who mocked and beat the sinless Jesus, and the love of the Lord who endured all that insult and walked the way of salvation. Jesus, who knows all things, carried our sins He had taken on through His baptism, went on to the judgment of the Cross, and rose again, completing salvation. The saint who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes the righteousness and the love of God, who bore suffering to save him, and with thanksgiving preaches this gospel.

Jesus who will sit at the right hand of the power of God

"As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief

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priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 'If You are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will by no means believe. And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.' Then they all said, 'Are You then the Son of God?' So He said to them, 'You rightly say that I am.' And they said, 'What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.'" (Luke 22:66–71).

"If You are the Christ, tell us"

After Jesus had suffered mocking and beating through the night, when day broke, the elders of the people, the chief priests and the scribes, gathered and led Jesus into their council. They gathered not to know and believe who Jesus is; to gain grounds for condemning Him to death they demanded, *"If You are the Christ, tell us."*

The Christ is the Savior and King sent by God. Jesus was the Christ, and He had already shown fully who He is through His words, His signs, and all His works. But the members of the council saw the evidence given and still did not believe. Jesus' word, *"If I tell you, you will by no means believe,"* exposes that their question was not for faith but for condemnation.

Jesus said, *"If I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me."* They prided themselves on knowing the Law and the Prophets, yet when the Christ to whom those Scriptures testify came before their eyes, they did not answer. Even with Bible knowledge and religious office, if a person holds to his own righteousness and judgment he fails to recognize the Son of God. The faith that leads to salvation is not placing the word of God

under one's own thinking but lowering the heart before that word and receiving it.

"The Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God"

Jesus then declared, *"Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."* At that moment Jesus was bound and being interrogated by men, but the council's judgment could not change His identity and His authority. Jesus was the One who would soon die on the Cross, rise in three days, ascend, and sit at the right hand of the power of God. The right hand of God reveals the glory, the kingship, and the final reign of the risen Christ. Men were interrogating Jesus now, but in the end every person will stand before the judgment seat of Jesus, the eternal King.

When the council members asked, *"Are You then the Son of God?"* Jesus answered plainly, *"You rightly say that I am."* This is the clear declaration, "Yes. I am He." Jesus is not merely a prophet or a religious leader but the Son of God, who came to this earth in a human body. Yet the council members did not fall down before that word and believe; saying, *"What further testimony do we need?"* they made Jesus' true testimony the evidence for His condemnation.

Jesus, the Son of God, came to accomplish the work of the Christ who saves sinners. At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken charge of the sins of all the people of the world on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Now He would carry those sins, hang on the Cross, shed His blood and die, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and rise in three days,

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triumphing over sin and death. And He would ascend and sit at the right hand of the power of God, revealing His authority as eternal Savior and King.

Jesus took charge of all our sins with His baptism, received all their judgment on the Cross, rose from the dead, ascended, and sat down at the right hand of God, completing salvation. The person who believes that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God believes also the salvation He accomplished by the water and the Spirit. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit, becoming a child of God.

The council members saw Jesus in person and heard His word, yet they would not give up their own judgment and did not believe. We too must lower our hearts before the word of the gospel God has testified to and receive it as it is. Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ who completely saved sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The council of men condemned Jesus, but Jesus rose again, ascended, and sat at the right hand of the power of God. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, even before the world's judgments and opposition, believes in Jesus Christ—who completed salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection and reigns as eternal King—as his Savior and Lord, and boldly testifies to this gospel. ✉

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 22

[Question] 1. What important events are recorded in Luke chapter 22?

Luke chapter 22 begins with the plot to kill Jesus and the betrayal of Judas, and records the Passover supper and the new covenant, the teaching on serving and the foretelling of Peter's denial, the prayer on the Mount of Olives, the arrest of Jesus and Peter's denial, and the interrogation before the council. At the center of all these events stands Jesus, who obeys the Father's will and saves sinners.

The chief priests and the scribes, though they feared the people, sought a way to kill Jesus; and when Satan entered Judas Iscariot, he sought an opportunity to hand Jesus over for money. Men plotted evil in secret, but Jesus knew what was to come and went forward on the way of salvation written in the Scriptures.

When the Passover came, Jesus sent Peter and John to prepare the supper. Just as Jesus had said, the disciples met a man carrying a pitcher of water and prepared the Passover in a large upper room. Jesus gave them the bread and the cup and made known the new covenant He would establish with His own body and blood.

"And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:19–20).

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When a dispute arose among the disciples over who was the greatest, Jesus taught that just as He was among them as One who serves, so the one who goes before must also serve. He also prayed that Peter's faith would not fail, and told him to strengthen his brothers when he had returned.

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives according to His custom and told the disciples to pray that they might not enter into temptation, and He Himself, with the suffering of the Cross before Him, prayed earnestly in obedience to the Father's will. After His prayer He was arrested with the kiss of Judas, and Peter, as foretold, denied Jesus three times and then wept bitterly.

When day broke, Jesus was interrogated before the council, but He made plain that He is the Son of God and the One who will sit at the right hand of the power of God. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. This chapter shows Jesus, who accomplished the will of salvation without wavering even amid men's betrayal and weakness.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 22 verse 1, what are the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, mentioned together, and how are the two feasts related?

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are feasts commemorating God's salvation, by which He delivered the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Passover commemorates their escape from the judgment of death through the blood of the lamb on the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread is the feast in

which, for seven days from the next day, they ate unleavened bread and remembered the deliverance by which they came out of Egypt in haste.

"The Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover" (Luke 22:1).

At the Passover, Israel killed a lamb and put its blood on the two doorposts and on the lintel. When God saw that blood, He passed over them in judgment. At the Feast of Unleavened Bread they removed leaven from their houses and ate bread without leaven, recalling the grace by which they left the old land of slavery and came to live as the people of God.

"The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:13–15).

The two feasts differ in date, length, and manner of keeping, but they belong to the one event of the Exodus. Because Israel escaped judgment through the blood of the lamb and then came out of Egypt and began a new life, Luke records the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread bound together.

The Passover lamb points to Jesus, who would save sinners. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The saint who has been saved by believing this gospel must throw away evil and falsehood, like the old leaven, and live

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in sincerity and truth.

[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 22 verses 1–2, why did the chief priests and the scribes seek a way to kill Jesus before the Passover?

The chief priests and the scribes sought to kill Jesus because He exposed their sins and hypocrisy, taught in the temple with the authority of God, and many people gave ear to His word. To protect their own position and influence, they rejected Jesus, whom God had sent.

"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude." (Luke 22:1–6).

Their fear of the people was also an important reason. If they seized Jesus openly among the crowds gathered in Jerusalem to keep the Passover, a riot could break out. So they sought a way to have Jesus handed over to them secretly, when the multitude was absent.

When Judas Iscariot came of his own accord and conferred about handing Jesus over, they were glad and promised to give him money. Since Judas could tell them the time and place when Jesus would be away from the crowds, the leaders who feared the people gained their opportunity to arrest Him.

Rather than realizing their wrong before the word and

turning back, they sought to remove Jesus, who had exposed them. This event shows that the desire to protect religious position and human reputation can go as far as defying the word of God. When the word exposes our faults, we must humble our hearts and turn back.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 22 verses 3–6, why did Judas Iscariot decide to betray Jesus and hand Him over?

The direct cause of Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus was that Satan entered him. Judas accepted Satan's temptation, went of his own accord to the chief priests and captains, conferred on how to hand Jesus over, and after promising to receive money he looked for a time when the multitude was absent.

"Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude." (Luke 22:3–6).

Judas was one of the twelve disciples and kept the common money box, but the Gospel of John records that he used to steal what was put into it. Even when Mary poured costly fragrant oil on Jesus, he spoke as if caring for the poor, but in fact he coveted the money.

"But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, 'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it" (John 12:4–6).

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The word that Satan entered him does not mean that Judas bore no responsibility. Judas loved money and his own desires more than the word of Jesus, and Satan had him carry out the betrayal through that heart. It is not the outward place of following Jesus that keeps a person, but believing the word and keeping one's heart.

Jesus knew Judas' betrayal in advance, and said that the Son of Man goes as God has determined, but woe to the man who betrays Him. God's plan of salvation was fulfilled, yet Judas' responsibility for the act of betraying Jesus was also plain. We must not let greed rule our hearts, but believe and follow the word of Jesus.

[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 22 verses 19–20, what do the bread and the cup that Jesus shared mean?

The bread Jesus shared points to His body, given over to save sinners, and the cup points to the new covenant established by the blood Jesus would shed on the Cross.

"And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:19–20).

His saying that the bread is His own body shows that Jesus came in a human body to save us and sacrificed Himself. Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world on His body by receiving baptism from John, and He gave over to the Cross the body that carried those sins.

The word that He establishes the new covenant with His own

blood is the promise that, by receiving the judgment of sin in our place and shedding His blood, He remits the sins of everyone who believes this salvation and makes them God's people. The blood of Jesus testifies that on the Cross He paid in full the price of the sins He had taken charge of through His baptism.

Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Through the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper the saint remembers Jesus, who gave His body and shed His blood for him, and must believe in that grace and give thanks.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 22 verses 35–36, why did Jesus tell the disciples to prepare a money bag, a knapsack, and a sword?

Jesus let the disciples know that, unlike on their earlier preaching journey, after He was rejected and arrested they would face a time when they could hardly expect people's welcome and help. So He had them prepare a money bag and a knapsack, to carry on their living and their mission of preaching even in hard circumstances.

"And He said to them, 'When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?' So they said, 'Nothing.' Then He said to them, 'But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." For the things concerning Me have an end.' So they said, 'Lord, look, here are

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two swords.' And He said to them, 'It is enough.'" (Luke 22:35–38).

Earlier, when Jesus sent the disciples out with nothing, they lacked nothing. The word now to take a money bag and a knapsack does not mean that they should no longer trust God's supply; it means that in the changed circumstances they were to prepare responsibly for the work entrusted to them.

The sword points not to a weapon of the flesh but to the spiritual arming of holding fast the word of God by faith. The word to sell even one's garment and buy a sword is the teaching to believe the word of God and make it one's own even at the cost of sacrifice.

"Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:17).

The disciples understood Jesus' word as a sword of the flesh and showed Him two swords. Later, when one disciple struck the servant of the high priest with a sword and cut off his ear, Jesus stopped the act and healed the servant's ear. The battle the disciples were to fight was not violence but the spiritual battle of preaching the gospel with the word and faith.

[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 22 verse 37, which prophecy of the Old Testament did Jesus say would be fulfilled in Him?

Jesus said that the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 53 verse 12—that the Servant of God would be treated like one of the criminals—would be fulfilled in Him. The Gospel of Luke conveys this as Jesus being regarded as one numbered with the transgressors.

"I say to you that this which is written must still be

accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." (Luke 22:37).

Isaiah prophesied that God's righteous Servant would Himself bear the iniquities of many, give up His own life, and be numbered with the transgressors.

"Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12).

Jesus committed no sin, but He took charge of all the sins of the world on His body by receiving baptism from John. So He was arrested and interrogated like a sinner, and hung on the Cross between two criminals, receiving the judgment for the sins He had taken charge of.

Jesus' word that the things concerning Him were being accomplished made plain that His suffering was not an accidental failure but the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation written beforehand in the Scriptures. Jesus was judged on the Cross and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The sinner who believes this salvation puts on the righteousness of Jesus and is justified before God.

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[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 22 verse 40, what did Jesus mean by commanding the disciples, *"Pray that you may not enter into temptation"*?

Jesus' command means that the disciples were to stay awake and seek God's help, so that in the coming hardship and temptation they would not lose their faith or fall into the place of denying Jesus.

"Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.'" (Luke 22:39–40).

When Jesus was arrested, the disciples would go through fear and confusion. Satan sought to sift them like wheat, and Peter, though he declared he would die with Jesus, would deny Him three times that night. Because they could not overcome the trial by their own resolve alone, they had to pray beforehand.

Prayer is acknowledging one's own weakness and asking God's help from the heart. Jesus also, with the Cross before Him, did not put His own desire first but pleaded that the Father's will be done. We too, even as we ask to be spared hardship, must ask for the faith and strength to follow God's will.

The prayer not to enter into temptation is not a prayer only that trials disappear altogether. It is a prayer that does not take coming danger lightly, but asks the Lord's help so that even in trial we do not abandon the word, and keep the faith, and obey.

Therefore we must pray in advance for ourselves, our families, the church, and the work of the gospel. To throw away the arrogance of relying on our own strength and devices, and to ask God's grace and protection so that we may endure whatever trial we meet in faith—this is the right posture of faith.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 22 verses 41–46, why did Jesus pray in deep agony?

Jesus prayed in deep agony because the time had drawn very near when He would be judged on the Cross for all the sins of the world, which He had taken charge of by receiving baptism from John. Jesus knew that He would be arrested, scourged, and nailed to the Cross to die.

"He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.' Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:41–44).

Jesus' agony was actual pain suffered in a true body. Because Jesus had put on a human body, He actually felt the pain of the scourge, the nails, and the Cross. Moreover, the sinless Son of God had to carry the sins of all mankind and receive their judgment. So as He prayed in agony, His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground.

Jesus asked that the cup be taken away, but He did not insist on His own will. His word asking that the Father's will be done rather than His own shows His resolve to obey to the end the Father's will to save sinners. After seeking the Father's help in prayer and accepting His will, Jesus did not flee but went forward before those who came to seize Him.

Jesus received on the Cross the judgment for the sins He had taken charge of, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. His deep agony and obedience show how great is His love for saving sinners, and by how great a sacrifice our salvation was accomplished.

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[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 22 verse 42, what does *"this cup,"* of which Jesus spoke, point to?

The words *"this cup"* of which Jesus spoke point to the judgment of God, the suffering, and the death He would receive on the Cross because of all the sins of the world, which He had taken charge of by receiving baptism from John.

"He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.'" (Luke 22:41–42).

In the Scriptures the cup is used to signify the portion given to a person or what he must receive. In particular it is used as an expression pointing to God's wrath and judgment on sin. The cup Jesus had to drink was the judgment of sin, including arrest and mocking, scourging and the pain of the Cross.

Jesus is the Son of God, who originally had no sin. But because He took charge of the sins of mankind on His own body by receiving baptism from John, He had to pay the price of those sins on the Cross. Thus the baptism of Jesus and the Cross form one salvation, in which sin was transferred and that sin was judged.

Because Jesus knew the pain of the Cross, He pleaded that this cup be taken away; yet at last He obeyed the Father's will and received that cup. As a result, whoever believes in Jesus escapes the judgment of sin he himself deserved and obtains the remission of sin and eternal life.

[Question] 11. In Luke chapter 22 verses 43–44, how did the angel from heaven help Jesus as He prayed in agony?

The angel from heaven appeared to Jesus as He prayed with the suffering of the Cross before Him, and strengthened Him.

"An angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (Luke 22:43–44).

Because Jesus had put on a true body, He actually felt the pain of the scourge and the Cross that He would receive. Since He had taken charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, the time to receive the judgment for that sin was drawing near, and He was in agony so deep that His sweat became like drops of blood.

Jesus, strengthened by the angel, did not stop praying but prayed still more earnestly. From this we see that the angel from heaven strengthened Jesus so that He could continue praying in obedience to the Father's will.

This scene shows that the Father did not abandon the Son's prayer but gave the help that was needed. Yet the Father's will was not to remove the Cross, but to give Jesus strength to bear that road to the end.

We also, before hardships we cannot avoid, must not rely on our own strength alone but ask God for help. God helps us also through the prayers and comfort of other saints, and gives us strength to bear in obedience the work He has entrusted to us.

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[Question] 12. In Luke chapter 22 verses 54–62, what lesson do Peter's denial and repentance give us?

Peter's denial and repentance teach us that self-assurance and willpower alone cannot overcome trial, and that we must remember the word of Jesus, realize our wrong, and return to the Lord.

"Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are saying!' Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So Peter went out and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:60–62).

Peter declared that he would go with Jesus both to prison and to death. But when Jesus was arrested and danger reached him as well, he was seized with fear and denied three times that he knew Jesus. His declaration collapsed easily before the trial.

When the rooster crowed, Jesus turned and looked at Peter, and he remembered the word that he would deny Jesus three times before the rooster crowed. He went outside and wept bitterly, acknowledging his sin and weakness. Repentance appears in remembering the word, acknowledging one's wrong, and turning from one's own thoughts to rely on the Lord.

Jesus knew in advance that Peter would fail, yet He did not cast him off. He prayed that his faith would not fail, and after he returned He gave him the commission to strengthen his brothers. From this we see that repentance is not remaining in failure but the way of rising again in faith within the Lord's grace and bearing the work entrusted to us.

We too must not overtrust our own faith and resolve, but pray that we may not enter into temptation. When we have done

wrong, we must not make excuses or despair, but acknowledge it before the word and return to Jesus. When we believe the salvation Jesus accomplished and rely on that grace, we can rise again even after failure and live as those who strengthen others.

[Question] 13. In Luke chapter 22 verses 54, 63, and 66, explain the process by which Jesus was interrogated.

The interrogation of Jesus proceeded in stages: He was led away by night to the high priest's house, then the men guarding Jesus mocked and beat Him, and after day broke it was carried out formally in the council of the Jews.

"Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance." (Luke 22:54).

Those who arrested Jesus led Him away to the high priest's house. It was here that Peter's three denials took place, and the men guarding Jesus mocked Him, blindfolded Him, beat Him, and taunted Him to guess who had struck Him.

"The men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, 'Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?' And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him. As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council." (Luke 22:63–66).

When day broke, the assembly of the elders, including the chief priests and the scribes, gathered and led Jesus into their council. They asked Jesus whether He was the Christ and whether He was the Son of God. When Jesus answered that, as

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they said, He is the Son of God, they took that word as evidence of blasphemy.

The interrogation by the Jewish leaders leads on to the trial before Pilate, the Roman governor. That is, in Luke chapter 22 the night custody and mocking at the high priest's house and the council's interrogation at dawn take place, and in chapter 23 Jesus is handed over to Pilate.

Jesus had no sin, yet He was interrogated and mocked in the place of a sinner. He did not defend Himself to escape the Cross; He obeyed the Father's will in order to receive the judgment for the sins He had taken charge of by receiving baptism from John.

[Question] 14. In Luke chapter 22 verse 69, in what position did Jesus say He would sit in the future?

Jesus said that He would sit in the seat of power and honor that God gives.

"'If You are the Christ, tell us.' But He said to them, 'If I tell you, you will by no means believe. And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.'" (Luke 22:67–69).

The right hand of God points to the seat of honor, power, and rule. At that moment Jesus was under arrest and interrogation, but He is the One who would rise from the dead, ascend, and sit at the right hand of God and reign.

"The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" (Psalm 110:1).

Jesus, seated at the right hand of God, reigns until His enemies are made His footstool, and at last He judges sin and death and Satan and every adversary. He is also the King of the

people who believe the salvation He accomplished, and He protects and leads them.

Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. So Jesus, seated at the right hand of God, is the Savior who completed salvation, and the King and Judge who will judge all men.

The leaders of the council looked on Jesus before their eyes as a powerless sinner, but He is the Son of God, who will one day receive the worship of all things. We must not see Jesus merely as a teacher or a religious figure, but believe in Him as the King and Savior who lives and reigns even now, and obey His word. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus is the God of power

< Luke 22:7-38 >

"Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.' So they said to Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare?' And He said to them, 'Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says to you, 'Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?'" Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.' So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover. When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is

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betrayed!' Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing. Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors." But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 'But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' And the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.' But he said to Him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.' Then He said, 'I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.' And He said to them, 'When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?' So they said, 'Nothing.' Then He said to them, 'But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." For the things concerning Me have an end.' So they said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' And He said to them, 'It is enough.'"

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Prayer is asking God for help

We must pray before God. For God must help us. When things are hard and difficult we must pray, and when a matter is too heavy to bear alone, we must share the problem with one another and pray together for one another. When we do so, I believe God helps us. God is our God, and He is the One who hears our prayers. Therefore we must live praying with the faith that God answers our prayers.

Prayer is coming before God with one's own problem and asking for help. The person who truly has no faith cannot come before God in faith with his hard problem and ask for help. So we must have faith. If our faith is too small to pray alone, we must tell our circumstances to each department, ask for help, and pray together. And as we follow believing people in prayer, we learn how to pray. There are cases where people say they believe and yet, with a truly hard problem in hand, cannot sincerely ask for help. But if we sincerely ask for help even with faith as small as a mustard seed, we receive help. When we unite and pray together like this, we taste the power of God—why then would we only sit and worry?

In the Book of Job, even Satan the Devil came before God and asked whether he might afflict Job. Would Job fear God for nothing, he said, and asked God to let him once destroy all Job had. We cannot call that true prayer, but it is a fact that he asked something of God. In today's text also the Lord spoke: *"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31)*. Satan asked to shake the disciples greatly, once, to see whether they truly believed or not. God sometimes permits such a request. He says, try it once. Just as shaking a persimmon tree brings down not only the ripe persimmons but the unripe ones too, He lets the shaking reveal whether the faith

is true or not.

So the Lord prayed before the Father that the disciples' faith would not fail. You and I also must surely pray when we meet hard things. First each one prays himself, then tells his circumstances to the one who goes before him, and prays together in faith through the meetings and each department. And through prayer we must experience and taste that God lives. Tasting the power of God is not only His healing of the sick. To lay before Him a matter in our life that needs help and to have that problem solved by God's help—that is experience, and the answer to prayer. The busier a person is, the less well he prays. But each of us must pray like this, and gather and pray together, and pray for brothers and sisters who have met hardship, and pray for the workers and for the gospel, asking for help.

Jesus is the God who knows all things

What I want us to consider together through this word today is the fact that Jesus knows all things, because He is not merely a man but God. We will look together at His nature, His deity, and His power.

After Jesus received baptism from John, and before He was crucified, the Passover, the feast of Israel, drew near. So the Lord, intending to keep the Passover with His disciples, told them to prepare a guest room in which to eat the Passover. Because the Lord is God, He is the One who knows all things. So He said: *"Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"'" (Luke 22:10–11)*. He told

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them to ask where the guest room for receiving guests was, and said that the man would show them a large, furnished upper room, and there they were to set out the food and prepare the Passover.

Jesus often spoke like this. He told them to go into a certain village and loose a colt that was tied there and bring it, and said that if the owner asked as they were bringing it, they should say, *"The Lord has need of it" (Luke 19:31)*. The Lord already knew all of it. Did He not know in advance what the owner would ask when they loosed the colt, and even that when they said the Lord had need of it, he would give it up without a word—and so had spoken to that owner beforehand? Reading the four Gospels we can see one fact: though the Lord lived on this earth in a human body, there was nothing He did not know. Because the Lord knows all things He is truly at peace; because He knows all that is ahead there is nothing that frustrates Him; and because He has power there is nothing that distresses Him.

But what about us? We are not God. We surely have the faith that we are God's children and God's servants, yet even as we live with that faith, at times the thought comes, "The Lord is God, and I am merely a man." The Lord knows everything, but we do not. Our brothers and sisters, too, not being God, are always lacking, needy, and weak. The text records that the disciples met everything just as the Lord had said and prepared the Passover. If one truly knew everything and had the power and strength to do everything, what would there be to be frustrated about? Is that not so? I wish that we, and our brothers and sisters, were like that. It is the same with me. Living believing God and yet lacking power—if there is one regret, that is it.

Jesus is truly the One who knows all things and can do all things. Only, to save us He was born as a man, endured contempt for a while, received baptism from John, suffered spitting and

scourging, was nailed to the Cross, and at last died for us. Jesus is truly God. Even when He told them to prepare the Passover, He told them to enter the village, follow the man carrying the pitcher of water, and speak to the master of that house. The disciples confirmed the large upper room and prepared the Passover according to the Lord's word. Because Jesus is God, the disciples entered the village and met the man carrying the water pitcher exactly as He had said. The man must have been not a little surprised when a band of strangers followed him. But the disciples entered that house and did just as the Lord had told them.

The new covenant established in the Lord's Supper

When the Passover drew near, the Lord did not stop at merely keeping Israel's feast; He held the Holy Supper. The Passover is the great feast of the deliverance of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. On that very great feast the Lord desired to eat the last meal with His disciples. He desired to share the evening meal, to break bread and pass the wine. And through that place He desired to speak, and to leave His last testament as well. Sitting at the meal with the disciples in that house, He said: *"With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:15–16)*.

Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and said: *"Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes" (Luke 22:17–18)*. And He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: *"This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19)*. After the

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evening meal He likewise took the cup and said: *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20)*.

What is the meaning held in this bread and cup? Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world on His own body with the baptism He received from John. And carrying those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment of sin in our place and died, and in three days rose again from the dead. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The bread is the body of the Lord that took charge of our sins through the baptism received from John, and the cup is the blood of the Lord shed for us. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sin and receives salvation. It does not come by our striving to change the word of God. We must believe that word just as it is.

The Lord who knew in advance that Judas would sell Him

Even while holding this Holy Supper, the Lord already knew that Judas would soon sell Him. He said: *"But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" (Luke 22:21–22)*. Judas seemed to serve Him most respectfully every day, calling Him Teacher and Rabbi, but the Lord already knew when he would sell Him. The Lord who knows all things would rather have been at peace.

The Son of Man goes as it has been determined. Because the Lord had taken charge of the sin of the world with the baptism received from John, He had to be nailed to the Cross; and since that was the Father's will, it had to be fulfilled just as written. But woe to that man who sells the Lord. All of this was the word

of God fulfilled just as it stands, so we simply believe. It does not come by striving to change the word of God; we must believe it as it is. Jesus knew all things like this.

In this world, can you meet a sect leader or a man of power who knows all his own destiny? There is no such person. Ask in a gathering of many or ask privately—there is no such person. Who could do that? Only Jesus knows all things. And we can become wise through faith. What we have to do is only to believe the word. However clever we are, could we deceive Jesus? We cannot. So to try to measure ourselves against the Lord or to probe and test Him is a thing that cannot be. The Lord truly knows all things.

The Lord who came as One who serves, and the reward of the kingdom of God

The Lord came to this earth and spoke of the kingdom of God. When a dispute arose among the disciples as to which of them was the greatest, the Lord said that the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over their people and those in authority are called benefactors, but that it would not be so with them. The greatest among them must be as the younger, He said, and the leader as one who serves. He said: *"Who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27)*. The Lord came to this earth as One who serves. He told us to serve, and serve again.

The Lord also spoke like this: *"You are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones*

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judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28–30). The kingdom the Father entrusted to the Lord, the Lord entrusts again to us, so that in that kingdom we sit together at His table, eating and drinking, and sit on thrones and rule.

The Lord wants us to believe and follow these words. He said that if we pass through hardship and suffering together with the Lord, He rewards that labor. The Lord spoke this way even of what is to come. It is truly important that we believe such promises. He said He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes—that is, until the meaning of the Passover is fully accomplished. The word Passover holds the meaning of passing over. It means passing over, without judging, the one who was to be judged. Such is the salvation God has bestowed on those who believe God and have received the remission of sin. When we receive the remission of sin by faith and enter the kingdom of God, we suffer no more pain or judgment. There is no sorrow either. With the Lord, in the kingdom the Father has given, we enjoy riches and glory, and in gladness and joy we sit on thrones and reign as kings.

The Lord said that He will have us rule the twelve tribes of Israel and will give us such authority. This may not be easy to understand. Perhaps we can understand it fully only when we go and live in that kingdom. But in the kingdom of God and in the Millennial Kingdom to be established on this earth, this word is fulfilled in substance. Just as Israel has the tribe of Levi, the tribe of Issachar, and the tribe of Zebulun, so the saints who serve the Lord also differ in gifts and appointed offices. Gifts differ, offices differ, everything differs. But to those who passed through trials and hardships with the Lord and were always with Him, the Lord said He would share out the kingdom He received from the Father. We must believe that on that day the Lord will treat you and me, who have lived for the kingdom of God, in that

way. If there truly is a reward for living for the Lord, will not the one who looks to that reward work all the harder even for its sake?

The Lord knew all the weakness of the disciples and all that was ahead. He said: *"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31–32)*. When Peter said that he was ready to go with the Lord both to prison and to death, the Lord said: *"I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me" (Luke 22:34)*. The Lord knew without exception what Peter's character was, whether his heart was sincere, and how his conduct would turn out.

The meaning of selling the garment to buy a sword

The Lord also asked whether the disciples had lacked anything when He sent them out before without money bag, knapsack, or sandals. When the disciples answered that they had lacked nothing, the Lord spoke a new word at this last table of the Holy Supper: *"But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one" (Luke 22:36)*. On the earlier preaching journey without provisions He had told them to carry nothing, but now He told them to sell even the garment and buy a sword.

Then the disciples answered, *"Lord, look, here are two swords."* The Lord said, *"It is enough" (Luke 22:38)*. The sword the Lord spoke of here is not an actual blade. It means that now, even at the cost of sacrifice, they were to grasp this word by faith

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and make it their own. Because the Lord already knew all the disciples' character and weakness and stubbornness, He did not rebuke them further but said it was enough and passed on. Jesus could do so because He is God. Had He been merely a man, the frustration would have been hard to bear.

Once, when the Lord said, *"I have food to eat of which you do not know,"* the disciples likewise did not understand what He meant. To the disciples urging Him to eat, thinking He must be hungry, the Lord said He had food they did not know. To disciples who knew only that one must eat to be filled and eat to live, it was a word beyond understanding. But the Lord knew even that weakness and lack, and embraced it.

You and I, living the life of faith, only believe and follow the word of God. There is nothing else. We cannot say, "The word of God says so, but I must devise my own method." For there is no truth beyond the word our God has spoken. What our Lord has spoken is the truth, and in the truth there is no falsehood. The truth is life itself, and that word lives and moves. Therefore it is wholly different from our methods. When we believe the word of the Old and New Testaments with the heart, our Lord sees that faith and says it is enough. All we can do is believe. We can play no other tricks, nor do we have anything superior of our own.

The power that joined the severed ear

There was in the disciples a side that was frustrating in the Lord's eyes. When He said that the Son of Man would be sold to the elders and the religionists, handed over to the Gentiles, and killed, Peter stepped forward saying such a thing would never be. He talked big, saying that if such a man appeared he would not leave him alone. But the Lord said, this night you will

deny Me three times. Peter vowed that he would never deny Him, and that he would go with the Lord to death and to prison alike.

The Holy Supper was the evening meal. After eating supper, the Lord said, let us go up the mountain and pray. In Israel and the lands of the Middle East, though the seasons can change sharply, when the weather is fine it is very dry and good for praying on a mountain. The Lord went up the mountain and prayed before the Father. But that very evening, Judas came leading soldiers and took Jesus away. Then one of the disciples drew a sword and struck off a man's ear, and Jesus took hold of the ear and joined it back on.

The four Gospels record this matter plainly, but the disciples recorded exactly what they saw Jesus do. When the ear cut off by the sword was taken hold of by Jesus and joined on, it was restored. Do we have the power to join back a severed ear? We do not. Can we know all that is ahead? We cannot. Only Jesus can do so. Jesus knew everything—that after eating supper that evening and speaking this word He would go up the mountain and be taken, by whom He would be taken, and what would become of Him.

Hearing the word is more precious

While Jesus was on this earth, He often went to eat at the house of Simon the leper. He also went often to the house of Lazarus. In the house of Lazarus lived the two sisters, Mary and Martha, together with Lazarus. One day He was eating and sharing the word in that house, and Martha was busy in the kitchen preparing delicious food. And she complained that her sister was not helping her in her busyness but stayed seated close by the Lord.

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Then Jesus spoke. He said that though she was busy preparing many things, it would be enough to prepare only one. But hearing His word, He said, is the more precious. This does not mean that food should not be prepared. The Lord delights in our believing the word of God. He does not delight in a person showing off his own talents before the Lord instead of believing the word. When we believe the word of God, in that word itself there is life and blessing. In that word our Lord has spoken are contained all your happiness and blessing and eternal life and riches and glory.

Let us know that Jesus is God and become those who believe the word

Therefore, when we believe that word, it actually becomes yours and mine. That is why we must know and believe the fact that Jesus is not a man but God. This faith is very important. On the evening before He was crucified, Jesus ate with His disciples, spoke this word, and that night went up the mountain and was taken. Knowing fully by whom He would be taken and what would become of Him, He still said, *"This is My body which is given for you" (Luke 22:19)*. With the baptism received from John, Jesus took charge of your sins and mine on His own body.

He also said, "This is My blood. It is shed for you." What is it to be for us? It is to take charge of our sins, to receive the judgment for sin in our place, so that we are not judged. Our Lord lifted the bread for you and me and said, "This is My body." This means that He gives His body over to take our sins upon it and remove them. And lifting the cup of wine He said, "This is My blood which I shed for you." When we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took charge of our sins

with the baptism received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for those sins in death, and rose again—we receive the remission of sin and receive salvation.

Jesus is God. He is not a man. You and I are human, but Jesus is God. We must have faith in that fact. And we must become those who read and believe the word of God. There is no room to interpret this word differently. It is exact in the original text, and the same in the Hebrew and in the Greek.

Dear fellow believers, believe the word of God, and believe that Jesus is God and the Son of God. Believe also that He is the one God for us. Believe that this God has saved you and me from sin and destruction, and believe that by faith we have become the children of God. When we live believing the word of God and ask for help, we receive grace. Let us become not unbelieving but believing, and even if we cannot run the whole way in one stretch, let us step forward one step at a time and all together experience God. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Have ten thousand instructors in the church and learn

< Luke 22:14-30 >

"When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!' Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing. Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors." But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who

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serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 'But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

Jesus led the Lord's Supper in person. Praying Himself, He lifted the bread, broke it, and spoke like this: *"This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19)*. After the evening meal He took the cup and spoke likewise: *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20)*. So He shared the bread and the wine with His disciples and held the Lord's Supper.

This bread is the Lord's body, and this cup is the blood Jesus shed to deliver us from sin. We must not know this word merely as knowledge. We must engrave it on our life and heart as a deep lesson.

The salvation He accomplished in person, coming in the flesh

What does the body of Jesus mean to you and me? Does it not mean that the Lord, to save us, came to this earth in a body of His own and sacrificed Himself? This is no mere theory. Our Lord came to this earth, put on a human body, passed through the process of growth, took charge of our sins, went through the insult that followed, and was hung on the Cross. Because He bore all this labor and sacrifice, you and I have received salvation.

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We must know this fact clearly. We must not know only vaguely that the Lord saved us. Our Lord came to this earth exactly as He had promised and spoken in the Old Testament, and accomplished the work of salvation in person. Because the Lord bore all this labor with His own body for you and me, we have received salvation. If the Lord had not done this work for us, we could never have been saved.

It is like building a house. A house is raised because the designer and the builder, and the technicians and laborers working under them, have each done their part. Our Lord, though He is the Creator and God, came to this earth in a human body as promised, to save us mankind completely. And He sacrificed His own body to take charge of our sins, and for thirty-three years He felt and experienced all the weakness of us men. To feel and experience together means that He felt with us and went through it with us.

Living together with us, Jesus knew all too well how weak and pitiful man is, and also how proud. After feeling and experiencing all of it, He carried out, exactly as originally planned, the labor of taking charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John and of dying on the Cross. Jesus took on all the sins of the world with the baptism received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received all the judgment for those sins in death, and in three days rose again. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins and receives salvation. The Lord did not save us with a mere word, without any labor.

The dispute over which of them was the greatest

Looking at the word that follows, from verse 24 to verse 30,

a dispute arose among the disciples of Jesus as to who was the greatest. Then Jesus said, do not the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over their people? To exercise lordship is to rule unconditionally, to press down and trample. And those who rule call themselves benefactors. "I have done you good. I have made many allowances for you," they say, and lord it over people. But the Lord said, it shall not be so with you.

The Lord said, *"He who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves" (Luke 22:26)*. You who believe in Me, He says, are not like that. What does it mean that the great one is like the younger? Who uses his strength—the young man or the old? The truly foremost person, like a young man, takes on the rough work himself and leads by example.

The young man sets the example with his own hands. He lifts and carries even heavy things with ease. The older man tells someone to clear that away, but the young man clears it away himself before being told. The great one among you is like the one who works in person. He is not one who only talks but one who really works and serves. And the leader, He said, is like the one who serves.

"I am among you as the One who serves"

Our Lord said, *"Yet I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27)*. Jesus is speaking this way to His disciples, and today to you and me as well.

Before I met the Lord, in the old days, I used to think: when I finish studying theology and go to a church to preach, how shall I press down the elders, press down the young men, press down the sisters, so that no one but I remains standing in that church?

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That was before I was born again.

But after I met the Lord through the word, such thoughts never even arose; I could not do so, and I did not want to. The Lord labored and sacrificed so much for me—should I not also become one who helps them in body and in spirit in order to preach the gospel to them? The Lord Himself taught me that the one who presses down and oppresses is not a true head. Since the Lord labored for me and I received salvation, I too must labor for the brothers and sisters, for the Church of God, and for the preaching of the gospel, so that others also receive salvation. To go before does not mean to have become one who lords it over others.

Who is greater—the one who sits and eats, or the one who serves? The disciples counted the one who sits and eats the greater. But Jesus said that He was now among them as One who serves. If we have truly met the Lord, we must never think of lording it over others. If perhaps we are doing so, we must surely change. I believe that the more we know the Lord, the more we become not one who lords it but one who serves. If we are truly disciples of Jesus, we do not play the chief or put on an armband of authority; we become, of ourselves, those who serve. Is that not so?

The one who lords it over others is not a true disciple

The Lord asked the disciples why they quarreled like this to be the first. In truth, the one who goes before is the one who helps those under him. The one who leads them to serve the Lord well, who keeps them and protects them—he is truly the one who goes before.

It is so even in this world. A petty back-alley gang tramples those weaker than itself so that it alone may eat well and live well, but a leader who moves on a truly large scale is not so. He makes those under him live well, leads them, and does not abuse them at will. How much more, then, Jesus, the King of kings? If the King of kings labored for us and saved us from sin and brought you and me to life, then we also ought to live that way. Is that not so?

If I abused you and pressed you—do you not even know that?—would the church be built up? Receiving salvation first does not automatically make one the one who goes before. The one who truly understands the Lord and understands the people of God is the one who goes before. The one who crushes and wields power is not the one who goes before. Such a person must learn again.

It has already been long since the church was established. In all the time we have been together, have I ever crushed you? When I meet someone behaving roughly in the world, a rough spirit may rise up inside me too, but because I am a pastor I cannot act so. I have never once done so.

I cannot set a person who lords it over others in a higher seat. In the old days, too, those who lorded it without discernment were all brought down from their places. To those who lorded it and pressed others down, I gave counsel to be careful and not to do so. To those who kept on, I gave plain warning. The law of the kingdom of God is not a law that lets the one with fleshly strength reign as king. The one who lords it like that rather meets great trouble.

That we, born again of water and the Spirit, should even debate who is greater is itself a shameful thing. If I clear away cow dung and dog dung as I serve the Lord, then you too ought to do the same. What lording is there to speak of? The one who

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lords it over others is not one who truly follows Jesus. I know that God gave office so that we would serve more and care more, not that He set us in that place to lord it and press others down. Do you not agree?

The born again ought to live serving

David in the Old Testament was a greatly honored king. In the midst of war, David, too thirsty to bear it, murmured half to himself that he wished he could drink the water of a certain well across the valley. He did not command it; he merely said to himself that if he could only drink one dipper of that spring water, he would have nothing left to wish. But three mighty men who were at his side heard those words, broke through the enemy camp, broke through the enemy, reached that well, and drew the water. Fighting his way back victorious, he offered the water to the king, saying he had brought the water of which the king had spoken.

Did King David drink that water? “Why did you risk your life to bring this water? How could I drink it?” he said, and he would not drink it but poured it out on the ground. The water his man had drawn at the risk of his life, the water holding that labor—David could not bring himself to drink it. How much more, when Jesus gave His very life for us, could we treat that grace lightly? We are people who believe the Lord.

The Lord sacrificed and labored to save you and me, and we are those saved through faith. Then we too must not try to play the chief but, as a matter of course, live serving. If, after being born again, a person rather lords it over others, gathers money, and crushes and threatens the members, he is not truly a disciple of Jesus. We even need to doubt whether he is truly born again.

And if someone taught him to be so, the teacher too needs to be doubted. The person who, after receiving salvation, wants only to be served is never right. Is that not so?

The one who believes and follows Jesus is the one who goes before

Each of us does his appointed work until his strength is drained, and when another task arises beside it, we must help with that too. Though matters break out on every side and complaints come in, we must bear them all. And after doing all that, is there anyone who parades that he did this work? He has only done what he ought to do and served where he ought to serve. Yet if even the disciples of Jesus harbored wrong thoughts, would there not be many such people in the Church of God as well?

While we live on this earth such things must not be. We must look after the weak. What did our Lord do when He came to this earth? He made the blind see, cared for the pitiful and the weak, raised up the paralytic, and made the lame walk. In the end, did He not do the work of helping people? The powerful of the world today often crush the people rather than serve them, but I am not talking politics now—I am talking about ourselves.

In the East the sense of "we" is strong, while in the West the sense of the individual is strong. In truth, before the Lord each single person matters. When one person reads the word and believes, he receives salvation; when he lives obeying by faith, he becomes a disciple of Jesus. It does not happen as a group. When each one of us changes, all of us can change.

If we still do not know this and leave things as they are, when will they ever come right? If we think they will improve by

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themselves if left alone, they never will—for ever. To be born again means to be changed completely. Thoughts change and conduct changes. I am not saying, change by force. Since the Lord served me, is it not fitting that we also serve? Since the Lord sacrificed Himself for me, should we not also sacrifice in the literature ministry for those not yet saved? Since the Lord labored for us, ought we not also to labor in the work of the gospel for the Lord's kingdom? Is that not so?

This is the basic of basics. The problem lies not in the wrong itself but in not knowing that it is wrong. Not knowing it is wrong, one cannot feel another's pain as one's own. When the other person is struggling, we must struggle with him. When he weeps, tears come with him; when he is weary, we are weary together; when he agonizes, we agonize together—that is a person of proper character. But if one says, whatever happens to the other, I am fine, then his character is not yet complete. He has not learned to ache together with others and to feel and experience together with them.

We must learn this much and well. Being a good speaker, being handsome, arguing logically, knowing how to crush others—none of this makes one the head. The one who learns Jesus and follows Jesus, not merely imitating but believing and following in truth, is the one who goes before. When we all become such people, others also receive salvation.

The Lord surely keeps what He has spoken

Our Lord said to His disciples: when I passed through many hardships you were always with Me, and as the Father has entrusted the kingdom to Me, so I entrust it to you. When He does away with this universe once and establishes a new

kingdom and a new universe, in that kingdom where the Lord reigns as King, He will give authority also to those who followed Him, to enjoy it. From verse 28 to verse 30 He spoke like this.

"You are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"

It is the word that He will establish the kingdom of God and reward there those who followed the Lord on this earth. So we must see it with the concept of a kingdom. We must not see it only as though each individual arrives there and all are simply equal. A kingdom must have a king, must have a people, and must have law. Only when these three are all present is it a kingdom. Without law it is no kingdom; without a people the king is no king; without a king it is no kingdom. In this world we cannot repay every wrong done to us, and though anger rises we cannot vent it; but the Lord says that in His kingdom He will repay even the wrongs we suffered on this earth. And even if there were no reward, we ought to live so for the Lord all the same.

This age is an age of unbelief. People admire the philosopher who said, "God is dead," and tell us to doubt every man's word. For there are many cases of trusting a man and being betrayed and disappointed. But we can believe our Lord Jesus Christ. For the Lord did not only speak; He surely kept His word and carried it into deed.

The Lord who said He would save us from sin came in the flesh Himself, received baptism from John and took charge of all the sins of the world, was nailed to the Cross, suffered merciless torture, and even suffered death. And He rose again from the dead and became our Savior. We who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit have received the remission of

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sin and received salvation. Because the Lord fulfilled all this according to His word, we can believe the Lord, and believe and follow Him.

The Lord surely keeps what He has spoken. Even among men there must be trust for people to follow and rely on one another; without trust nothing comes to pass. Is that not so?

Have ten thousand instructors in the church and learn from one another

As the Lord labored for us, we too must labor for the Lord and follow Him well. If the age of artificial intelligence is coming, we need not fear it; rather than seeing it only negatively, we can receive that age well and use it to preach the gospel more widely.

After Jesus rose again, the disciples saw the Lord who appeared to them again and came to know everything, and Almost all of the disciples were martyred while preaching the gospel. Even Thomas, who had said he could not believe without seeing with his eyes, went to India, preached the gospel, was seized, and was martyred. The disciples, one and all, testified to the Lord and served the work of saving souls until they were martyred.

You and I also, as the years pass, will lack bodily strength, be unable to do the heavy work, and entrust it to young workers. But besides the heavy work, how many light works there are that we can do! We must be those who serve for the Lord, those who labor for souls. We are doing well now. Only, among us there are some who have learned wrongly, and they weigh on my heart.

If there is one among us whose body is sick, we must visit him and share that pain together. Not pressing him right away to

believe in Jesus, but comforting him—how much does it hurt?—praying for him, singing praise for him, and serving him with all our heart. When we give our heart like that, I believe that through that heart they too will come to believe the God we believe in. What we can do is only to pray for them and add our small strength.

Are we really so clever? Is our intelligence so exceptional? We are all much alike. There is no separate special person. None of us is in a position to teach another. We simply learn one by one. All of you are my instructors. "That point in him is better than in me; that point I must learn," I say, and every day I see and learn the strengths you have. This sister is truly pure; one person knows how to spend his mettle for the Lord; another, though he seems to have no distinctive color, quietly serves the Lord and lives understanding others. Truly they are worthy of respect and worth learning from. This brother and that sister are all so. We must learn from one another.

When we have ten thousand instructors like this, we can become excellent people. The one who has no instructor and puts on airs alone is a foolish person. We must not become people who think themselves alone clever. That we have lived laboring for the Lord until now remains in our hearts as pride and self-respect. But a life lived not for the Lord but only for oneself leaves no self-respect—only servility and regret. Let us live a life in which self-respect remains.

The person who does not give ear to others' words and will not learn ends up the least among us. Such a person cannot grow. There is even a proverb in our country that a man who is born and does not learn is worse than a beast. If one will not learn, one does not grow. The body grows, but the heart and thinking do not. Such a person swings sharply in feeling—boundlessly high when things are good, boundlessly collapsed when they are

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not. Therefore we keep learning, turn back from what is wrong, and learn again and imitate and follow. So we are polished, and light comes out from us.

Let us become those who learn from one another and serve one another. Let us all pray together that the Lord will give health to the weak in body among us, and that the one who has an operation may recover well, and so close the message. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The serving King who established the new covenant with His own body and blood

< Luke 22:14-30 >

"When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!' Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing. Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who

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exercise authority over them are called "benefactors." But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 'But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

Jesus knew fully that the suffering of the Cross had drawn right in front of Him. He knew that Judas was the one who would sell Him, and He knew that the disciples would soon scatter and that Peter would deny the Lord three times. Yet the Lord did not avoid the place of the last supper, but said, *"With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15)*. The Lord prepared that place with His disciples in order to fulfill the Father's will to save sinners.

At that place Jesus called the bread His own body, and called the cup the new covenant established in His own blood. Yet the disciples, right after hearing of the Lord giving His own body and blood, disputed over which of them was the greatest. On one side the Savior was speaking of giving His own life to bring sinners to life; on the other, the disciples were thinking only of the seats where they would be exalted. By recording these two scenes together, the Gospel of Luke shows how different the heart of the Lord who serves sinners is from the heart of man that seeks to be exalted.

The serving King who established
the new covenant with His own body and blood

Jesus, who knew His suffering and yet prepared the Passover table

The Passover was the feast that remembered the salvation God bestowed when the people of Israel came out of slavery in Egypt. God promised to deliver from judgment the house on which the blood of the lamb was put, saying, *"When I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you" (Exodus 12:13).* What saved the people of Israel that day was not the ability or the good deeds of those inside the house but the blood of the lamb God had appointed. The event of the Passover, when judgment passed over, showed in advance what the Savior who would deliver us from sin and death would accomplish.

On that very Passover Jesus spoke of His own body and blood. The Lord said that the meaning of the Passover would be fulfilled in the kingdom of God, and made plain that with His own body He would accomplish the new salvation by which all mankind under sin escapes the judgment of God and enters the eternal kingdom. Just as the Passover lamb died and its blood was put on the house, so the sinless Jesus Christ was passed all the sins of the world onto His own body when He received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. And bearing all those sins Himself, He carried them to the Cross, was judged in our place, shed His blood and died, and rose again, delivering us from sin and death.

He who is in His essence God and knows all things came in the body of a man, and to save us, who lay under sin and death, He entered the way of suffering in person. In the Lord's word that He would give His body and shed His blood to save us, the subject and the object of salvation stand out plainly. The One who accomplishes salvation is Jesus Christ, and the ones to be

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brought to life by that body and blood are we, who have no merit at all.

Even the fact that Judas had determined to sell the Lord could not overthrow this plan of salvation. Jesus said, *"The Son of Man goes as it has been determined" (Luke 22:22)*, making plain that His death belonged to the way of salvation God had appointed beforehand. Even within Judas' evil choice, God fulfilled just as it was the work of salvation He had appointed. Therefore we believe the Cross as the righteous event of salvation God accomplished to bring sinners to life.

The bread and the cup point to the body and blood the Lord actually gave

Jesus broke the bread and gave it, saying, *"This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19)*. Then He gave the cup, saying, *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20)*. The bread and the cup point to the body the Lord would actually give and the blood He would actually shed for sinners. The sinless One was passed the sins of all mankind onto His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. And bearing those sins He carried them to the Cross, was judged in our place, shed His blood and died, and rose again, fulfilling this promise and establishing the new covenant. This is the right meaning held in the bread and the cup.

Under the old covenant, a man was condemned for his own sin of failing to keep God's law. But God promised the new covenant, in which He Himself remits that sin and remembers it no more. God said, *"I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:34)*. This promise does

not mean that God pretends not to see sin. The sinless Son of God was passed the sins of all mankind onto His own body when He received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. The Lord bore those sins and carried them to the Cross, received the judgment of sin in our place, shed His blood and died, and rose again. God, having actually carried out the judgment of sin like this and completed salvation, judges the person who believes this gospel to be without sin. The body and blood spoken of at the last supper were the very body and blood that actually accomplish this new covenant.

The rite of eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord's Supper does not itself remove the sins of the heart. Following the Lord's word, *"Do this in remembrance of Me" (Luke 22:19)*, the church, as it shares the bread and the cup, must remember the fact that the Lord was passed all sins onto His own body when He received baptism from John the Baptist, and that bearing those sins He carried them to the Cross, was judged, shed His blood, died, and rose again. What we must look to is not the shape of the food or the number of times the rite is performed, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit Jesus actually accomplished in history. When we believe this fact of salvation with the heart, we receive the remission of sin.

Before going to the Cross, Jesus first received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. The Lord, who had no sin at all, said at that time, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. With that baptism received from John, Jesus was passed all the sins the descendants of Adam would commit until the end of the world onto His own body. So John the Baptist, the next day, saw Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*.

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Jesus bore the sins passed on to Him through His baptism and carried them all the way to the Cross. Because He had taken charge of all the sins of the world, He received on the Cross the judgment for those sins in our place. Jesus received the punishment of sin, shed His blood, and actually died; and Luke plainly recorded that death: *"Having said this, He breathed His last" (Luke 23:46)*. The Lord thus fulfilled, according to the covenant, the word of the supper that He would give His body and shed His blood.

Jesus did not remain in the tomb but actually rose from the dead. At the empty tomb the angel proclaimed, *"He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:6)*. By rising, Jesus overcame sin and death and completed all the righteousness God had appointed and our salvation. Since Jesus was passed all sins onto His own flesh through His baptism, and bearing those sins was judged in our place on the Cross and died and rose again, in the gospel of the water and the Spirit there remains no price of sin left for man to pay.

Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all the sins of the world once and for all, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, becoming a child of God. The Scripture testifies, *"By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14)*. God does not put off salvation until our deeds become perfect; He judges righteous the person who believes the new covenant established with the body and blood of His Son. We who have received the remission of sin hold the Lord's Supper believing the fact that Jesus was passed all sins onto His own body when He received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and that bearing those sins He was judged in our place on the Cross, shed His blood, died, and rose again, completing salvation.

Therefore the Lord's Supper is a time that conveys clearly the fact of the salvation the Lord accomplished. The Scripture says, *"As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26)*. When the church shares the bread and the cup, it must plainly proclaim that the Lord was passed all sins onto His own body with the baptism received from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and that bearing those sins He was judged in our place on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose from the dead, completing salvation. The believer also, following the meaning of the supper, must confirm again this fact of the salvation the Lord actually accomplished. Thus the new covenant is handed on to us as the eternal promise the Son of God accomplished with His body and blood.

To the disciples disputing over the great seat, the Lord showed the way of serving

The disciples, after asking one another who would sell the Lord, soon disputed over which of them was the greatest. Luke recorded, *"There was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest" (Luke 22:24)*. Though the Lord had spoken of giving His own body and blood, the disciples' interest stayed on gaining a seat higher than others. They thought that even the great one in the kingdom of God is a man who stands over others like the powerful of the world.

Jesus said, *"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so among you" (Luke 22:25–26)*. The powerful of the world can set people under themselves and command them, and yet exalt themselves as men who bestow

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favors. But the office and authority of the church must be used to teach the word and look after weak members, to lead the work of the gospel in order, and to help others bear well the work entrusted to them.

The Lord said that the great one must be as the younger and the leader as one who serves. To be as the younger means that the one who goes before must also look first to what is needed and actually bear it. The one who goes before in the church must teach the word exactly and look into the circumstances of the members. When a member goes a wrong way, he must make plain what thought and conduct have departed from the word and set it right, and he must also labor together in preaching the gospel. So serving requires not only love and patience but also clear judgment and responsibility that keep the truth.

Jesus said, *"Yet I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27)*. The King of kings holds all the authority of God, yet with that authority He saved sinners and cared for His disciples. Jesus, as the Son of God, used His authority to bring sinners to life, and for us, who had no qualification to be exalted, He gave His body and blood in the lowest place. The Lord was passed all the sins of all mankind onto His own body with the baptism received from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and bearing those sins He was judged in our place on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again, completing salvation. So the word *"the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45)* shows plainly how the Lord served sinners. The Lord's service was the work of salvation that actually delivered sinners from sin and judgment and set them up as children of God.

Therefore the one who serves in the church must follow the Lord's way. He must help the members of the church believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit exactly and live following the

word of God. When the one who goes before rebukes, he must show plainly what has departed from the word, and hold up the member who has corrected his wrong according to the word so that he can bear his appointed work again. When a member is weak, he must hear the word together with him and help him find the work he can actually bear.

For example, when a member who has newly believed the gospel cannot distinguish his own thoughts from the word, we must teach him step by step which word corrects that thought. To a member who has handled his appointed work clumsily, we must show together what went wrong and how to mend it, and help him take up his work again. To care for the souls the Lord has entrusted is to convey the truth plainly, to look into their actual circumstances, and to labor together until that member walks the right way within the word.

We who are saved have chosen the way of working for the Lord's body

We who have received the remission of sin do not count it the success of faith to gain high office and receive service. Since God has already made us His children and set us as members of the church, each of us must care for the other members in his appointed place and keep and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who has chosen the way of living for the Lord bears as a matter of course the work of serving the church and the gospel.

This fittingness does not mean that everyone holds the same office and the same work. One member teaches the word, another takes charge of the literature and preaching work, and another looks after what the church actually needs. The one

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weak in body or hard-pressed in circumstances takes counsel with the church and finds what he can bear, and the one with strength takes on more of the burden the community needs. When each keeps his place and honors the other's labor, the church works as the body of the Lord, preaching the gospel and serving souls.

Even in a child already saved, the fleshly desire to be exalted and recognized can arise. The scene of the disciples disputing over who was greater even after hearing the Lord's word shows that the saved child too must examine such fleshly thoughts before the word. When such a heart is exposed, the child of God must acknowledge that the Lord's word is right and correct his own thought and conduct. If he has put forward his own name and merit, he acknowledges it; if with his authority he has made the members suffer, he apologizes; and he returns to the original responsibility the Lord entrusted to him.

Jesus, who received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, had all the sin mankind had committed passed onto His own body. The Lord bore those sins and carried them all the way to the Cross, was judged in our place, shed His blood and actually died, and rose from the dead, completing all the righteousness of God and salvation. We are children of God who have received the remission of sin by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since God has entrusted the work of the church to those children, we must care faithfully for the souls and the work entrusted to us today, and ask the Lord for the strength and wisdom we need. Even work that seldom catches the eye, if it is needed for preaching the gospel and building up the church, we bear gladly—that is the fitting life of one who has chosen to live for the Lord.

The Lord promised the disciples who had continued with Him in all His trials, *"I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My*

Father bestowed one upon Me" (Luke 22:29). The disciples did not buy the kingdom by boasting of the labor they shared with the Lord; the King determined to entrust His kingdom to them. This promise teaches us today also to bear faithfully the work the Lord has entrusted to us in the church. God knows even the labor no one sees within the church, and He does not forget the servant who has served the gospel according to His will, but has him be with the Lord in the eternal kingdom.

Dear fellow believers, what seat are we seeking in the church? If we are seeking a seat where we are recognized and can command others, we must look at Jesus, who, even while giving His own body and blood, was among His disciples as One who serves. We who have received the remission of all sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit are already God's children and members that make up the Lord's body. Therefore let the one who goes before care the more, let the one with strength take the heavier work, and let us all, in union with the church, preach the word of salvation to the souls who have not yet heard this gospel.

Jesus, knowing His suffering, still prepared the Passover table, and with the baptism received from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, He had all our sin passed onto His own body. The Lord bore that sin and carried them to the Cross, was judged in our place, shed His blood and died, and rose again, completing the new covenant. That King said, *"I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27)*. Now let us not remain in the place of disputing who is greater, but actually care for the people and the work the Lord has entrusted to us, and keep and preach the gospel. Believing the serving King who brought us to life with His own body and blood, let us bear the Lord's work faithfully with the church until the day He comes. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who has given us the grace to serve

< Luke 22:24-30 >

"Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called "benefactors." But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 'But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'"

We live doing the work of the gospel

We live doing the work of the gospel. Doing that work we make our living, and above all we strive to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit more widely. For a person to live as a person, there is much to prepare, beginning with food, clothing, and shelter, and none of it is simple. But my heart is always set on serving well the brothers and sisters of the churches across

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the country and preaching the gospel more widely. For that I always pray and prepare, that we may set the work in order and gain stability, preaching the gospel much and also living as people ought to live.

We have read Luke chapter 22 together. That word begins like this: *"There was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest" (Luke 22:24)*. A dispute arose among the disciples over who was the greater person. People carry on such disputes very often. But who is the great person? The one who thinks of the Lord and believes Him and lives for the Lord's glory—the one who lives fitted to the Lord's will—is the great person. Being tall does not make one great, and being short does not make one small. Such things have nothing to do with it.

Concerning such a dispute the Lord spoke: *"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves" (Luke 22:25–26)*. In the Church of God and in the kingdom of God, the great one is, in the end, the one who serves much. Not serving blindly, but guiding well, leading people to live well, and protecting them. The one who does not seek only to be served but rather serves—he is the great one.

In this world, when someone is called a king, the people are all his servants. The king is supreme; ruling the people, when he has need he makes them bear any sacrifice. People of high position—the world's ministers of state, the professors and doctors of the schools—count themselves righteous and excellent teachers and want to be honored. They seek praise and honor and service. But in the Lord's kingdom it is not so. In this point it differs greatly from the world.

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The Lord came to this earth as One who serves

I think that if we only know the word of the Scriptures rightly, the Christian's conduct and life come right, and the life of faith can also be lived rightly. It is because people do not know the Scriptures, or know them only by the letter, that they fail to become so.

The Lord came to this earth as One who serves. And so He served us. The Lord removed all our sins and made us the people of God. The great work of God the Father the Lord accomplished in person. Because the Lord served us, we could become righteous by knowing, believing, and receiving the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

How then did the Lord serve us? Jesus took on all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John. And carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving all the judgment of sin. In three days He rose again from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins and receives salvation. Because the Lord served us like this, we have received the remission of sin and become the children of God.

In the Church of God I sometimes meet things hard to understand. Though I try to live as one of the righteous, things happen that I simply cannot understand, and there are times when a fire rises in my heart and is hard to bear. Even so, what must be endured I must endure, and what must be waited for I must wait for. At such times I think, what would the Lord have done?

While the Lord was on this earth, He ate even with those who slandered Him. And for the people of this world He received baptism from John, took charge of the sin of the world, and died on the Cross. When I think of that, my hardships were nothing at all.

Can you really sit and eat with a person you utterly cannot understand? Can you sit across from someone who turns your stomach and share a meal? I am a man whose anger shows straight on his face. If something is wrong, I say it is wrong. If the other person understands, we can be reconciled right away. He has understood, so from now on he can do well, and what is past is finished. But when the other keeps on in his stubbornness, the frustration is beyond words.

When Jesus was on this earth He ate even with the Pharisees, even with the religionists. Since the Lord did so, should I, who call myself a disciple of the Lord, raise a storm because something is not acceptable to my own heart? The thought comes that I must endure and wait. When I think that way, my heart grows at ease. Since the Lord did so, I who follow the Lord can do so too. For the Lord is in me.

The heart that serves is the mark of the one who has the Holy Spirit

The Lord went on to say: *"Who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:27)*. Ordinarily people say that the one who sits and eats is greater than the one who serves. By the world's reckoning that is right. But in the Lord's kingdom it is not so. The Lord was rather among us as One who serves. He served us and removed our sins. And not only did He remove our sins; afterward too He has been concerned with us, leading us in the right way and helping us. The Lord has done so without ceasing, and He is doing so even now.

I think it is so with me as well. I am thankful before God that

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I do not merely hand the work over to the brothers and sisters while I ride about alone in a fine car putting on airs. Not to do so is only fitting. Being quick-tempered, when there is work I do not just leave it with others but go and do it together. At times I rather receive service. I am treated to delicious food, and receive much help through love and prayer. So I give thanks before God, and I too want to serve the brothers and sisters.

Taking thought so that those who work may work comfortably without being rained on—this too comes, in the end, from the heart that wants to serve. In truth, these are things the brothers and sisters could do for themselves; I could tell them to see to it and do only my own work, and it would not be counted a fault. One could not call that an evil thing. But one thing is plain before the Lord: in the person who has the Holy Spirit in his heart there is this heart that wants to serve.

It means there is a heart that wants to serve in whatever way it can. To serve this way or that, to help the work go well, to pray for health when someone is sick, to help wherever help can be given. The Lord was so, and we who have become the Lord's disciples are so as well.

The Lord who entrusts the kingdom of God

Yet in today's word the Lord made this promise: *"You are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28–30).* The Lord came to this earth as One who serves. Coming to this earth, with the baptism received from John and with the Cross He removed all our sins, and with the gospel of the water and

the Spirit He made us the children of God. He also grants us to enjoy eternal life in the future, and even now He lives and helps and keeps us by the Holy Spirit.

To have continued with the Lord in all His trials means that when the Lord passed through hardship, the disciples were there beside Him. To those who served the Lord and lived for His kingdom, who passed through many hardships and loneliness and persecution to carry out the Lord's work and will, the Lord says He will do the same. As God the Father entrusted this world and the kingdom of God to His Son, so Jesus says He will entrust all His blessings to us to rule. Only, He said He will do so not in this world but in the Lord's kingdom.

We serve as servants of love

I am truly thankful. When I think that those who live for the Lord come to this in the end, I am glad. Even if the Lord did not do this for us, we could not but live for the Lord. For that is the great joy and the thanksgiving of living for the Lord. And yet He has promised to reward like this those who live for the Lord, so a heart of overflowing thanks rises up.

But we do not serve the Lord in order to receive a reward. Because souls receive salvation and the Lord rejoices when we do this work, we do the work of the gospel and serve the Lord in many ways. If there were someone who did the Lord's work and then thought, "I have done this much, so should You not reward me this much?"—that would be truly awkward. The Lord too would be put in an awkward place. That would be as if we were the Lord's employees and the Lord were the boss, so that if we live for the Lord, the Lord must pay us back. Then the Lord would end up our debtor.

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But God's worker who works in the kingdom of God does not work to receive something. God has so loved us and saved us. The One who loved us and gave us eternal blessing asked us to tell this fact so that not we alone but others too may receive this blessing. Therefore we cannot disobey the command of the One who loves us; and because that command is so beautiful and precious, we do this work voluntarily. We are exactly such people. It is not that we do the Lord's work and then mean to demand something from the Lord.

If I entrusted some work to someone and he demanded something of me, saying, "I have done this much, so should you not do this for me?"—it would be burdensome beyond bearing. We are not in the relation of boss and employee but in the relation of love, the relation of those who have become servants of love. We are servants of love and servants of righteousness, not those who work for anything else.

I dislike putting anything in my own name. Even the factory I do not want under my name. Only the chapel must surely exist. For if we are to meet the brothers and sisters we must meet in the chapel, and if we kept moving to new places it would weary us all. All we have is the Lord's—what is there that belongs to an individual? The more one is entrusted with, the more one must live as a good steward, so it is rather a hard thing. If perhaps in the churches across the country there is someone with a heart to pile up his own things, I think it is because he does not yet fully believe the Lord's love.

We must examine our own faith

Have we any qualification to demand anything before the Lord? We have not. We have only received much from the Lord;

there is nothing we may hold up as our merit and demand from the Lord as our due. Is that not so? Looking at those who worked with us and left, there were some who thought, "I have served the Lord this much, so you must give me a high position and guarantee me an easy life." Such people have all departed.

Does a higher office mean lording it over others? Was a pastor set up so that he might lord it because he became a pastor? A pastor is, as the word itself says, one who serves. He is a shepherd who tends the sheep. He was set up to tend and serve the sheep well. Yet there are some—very few—whose thinking has gone wrong and who seek to lord it. Such people leave the church without fail. If there is anyone in the church in whom such a heart arises, he must examine his own faith. If a person has received salvation, serving the Lord is a joy and a delight. It is hard, to be sure, but when the Lord's work goes well, it is a joy. There is nothing we can demand of the Lord as an obligation.

The more we serve, the more we come to know how precious the Lord is. The more we live for the Lord, the better it is. That the Lord's work goes well is a greater joy than that my own work goes well. For the Lord's prospering is the Lord's glory, and that is our glory.

So the Church of God differs from the churches of the world, and the servant of God differs from what the world calls a servant. The words and the theory look the same, but the actual life differs. Some say that unless they lord it over others they feel like pastors without power. If a fine car is not bought for them they grow angry, and if the stipend is not large they count themselves pastors of no ability. So when an invitation comes from a church that offers a large stipend, they boldly abandon the flock and move to that church. Then at ministers' gatherings they boast before colleagues and seniors of the stipend they receive. "I receive so much a month—how much do you get?"

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they say, dividing pastors of large churches from pastors of small churches and speaking carelessly. They seem to know the word of God alike, but the life is utterly different. Therefore the Lord said that a tree is known by its fruit. The person who truly has the Holy Spirit in his heart is different.

I have lived well until now under the Lord's guidance. Of course the body is very weary. But there is nothing I can boast of as having lived for the Lord. Rather I am thankful that the Lord has helped me and given me the opportunity to do His work. There is more work ahead. What is past, I believe God did it all and Jesus accomplished it all. I consider that to care for the brothers and sisters is to care for the Lord. For you are the Lord's members, parts of the same body.

It is said that the kingdom of the Lord is not in word but in power. Are you and I truly those who serve before the Lord and yet give thanks? Or are we those who, having served much until now, demand something of the Lord? Even if we do not show it in deeds, are we not demanding in our hearts that we have something coming to us? Even then the Lord serves us and prospers us and blesses us. But if such a thought arises in our hearts, when the Lord looks on our hearts, what will He say? He will say it is awkward and fearful.

If someone thinks he has much to boast of in what he has done to serve the Lord, and much to receive from the Lord, that person must examine the matter of his own salvation. He must examine whether the Holy Spirit is in his heart or not, and whether he believes the word of God as the word. Even a saved person can be so when his faith is young, but when the years have passed he does not hold such a heart. Rather, he has only received help and blessing from the Lord, and never thinks that he has anything to collect from the Lord.

How is it with your heart and mine? Are we those who have

much to receive from the Lord? Or are we those who give thanks for what we have already received? Even if the Lord did not bless what we have done, if He gives us His work and the blessing of bearing it faithfully, is our heart one that would give thanks for that and live so until we meet the Lord? We are the latter. I know it is so. The one who does not believe thinks himself a king with claims to make on the Lord. But the one who has become the Lord's servant, the one who is so thankful for the Lord's grace, lives for the Lord, looks to the Lord to supply what is needed in its time, gives thanks because He supplies, and gives thanks all the more because He will supply hereafter. Therefore he serves the Lord.

That is so. So it is with me, and so with you. For what we have lived until now, we are truly thankful. When we think that the Lord will use us in the work of the gospel hereafter also, we are thankful beyond measure. We have received so much from the Lord that we want to serve still more. We want to strive that the Lord's gospel may be preached more widely. We want to make God's workers and God's people more prosperous. Because this is the heart the Lord has given, we are so thankful. I close the message. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

We receive answers when we pray giving our hearts to the Lord

< Luke 22:39-46 >

"Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, 'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.' And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, 'Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.' Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, 'Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.'"

Prayer is asking for help

Amen. Today's text speaks of the Lord going to pray. The Lord had a care upon Him. Without a care one does not pray, and without a want one does not pray either. Prayer is precisely asking for help. To plead, "Help me," is prayer. To rely on the

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Lord and rely again, to entreat Him for help, pleading and imploring and clinging to Him—that is prayer.

The prayer the Lord offered on the Mount of Olives

The Lord too, while on this earth, had a matter that weighed on Him. Because the Lord had already taken charge of all the sins of us mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He had to be crucified. When He thought of that work it was terrible to Him. It was a work He must surely bear, yet a work of very great suffering. So, being burdened, He wished if possible to avoid it, and prayed that if it were the Father's will, *"Take this cup away from Me" (Luke 22:42)*. For Jesus too was clothed in a body. To die nailed to the Cross is said to be a pain more extreme than any death a man suffers on this earth.

For on the Cross one does not die in an instant. Hanging with pierced arms and legs shedding blood, one must die slowly in the agony of torn flesh—so it is said to be that painful. When the Lord thought of that work, it pained Him greatly. So He prayed that, if it were possible, He might not pass through it—that if it were the Father's will, this cup might be moved away. But Jesus did not pray as we might, making obstinate demands that He be spared unconditionally.

He asked that, if this work could be accomplished without His suffering, it might be done so; but if that was not the Father's will—if being crucified was the Father's will—He prayed that it be done just so. Even while desiring that it be done as the Father willed, He asked help once more: if it were possible, let this cup be moved away. It was not that Jesus could not act as He pleased.

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The Lord could have gone against the Father's will; He could have said, "I cannot do it."

But the Lord did not do so. Among us there are some who, when they pray and ask for help, only press their own obstinate demands, whatever God's will may be. That is very wrong. We must first consider what would please God, and then pray. We should ask, if it is possible, to be spared that suffering; but if suffering is God's will, we should pray that it be done just so. This too is prayer. So the Lord prayed.

We must have an earnest heart that seeks peace

We also have many subjects for prayer. The subject we prayed over a little while ago was the news that North Korea intends to carry out a nuclear test. They mean to carry out a test beyond compare with what they have done before. Then America wants to strike, and we, caught between, may see this land become a battlefield if things go wrong. If that happens, it is self-evident that preaching the gospel will become hard for us. Therefore, thinking on these things, we must hold an earnest heart that desires that such suffering not come upon us.

First our hearts must be prepared. The heart that asks God that war may not break out must be prepared. Praying with the mouth alone will not do. Dear fellow believers, think of it. The leader of a great power is still a man who does all he can for his own country's good; but the leader of North Korea, fearing to lose his own power, is a man who seeks not the good of the country but his own personal good. In the hands of such men this situation hangs.

When talk of war arises, frankly, in some hearts the thought stirs, "Then let it just break out. I am weary of living anyway."

But if war really broke out and it came to that, the flesh might be at ease, but how would we preach the gospel? That is not the Lord's will either. Then what is the Lord's will? That we go on preaching this gospel—that is the Lord's will. That is self-evident.

Then there must be something our hearts desire of God. We must ask for peace—ask Him to give the peace in which we can serve the gospel. If war breaks out and nuclear bombs fly, even if America strikes first and turns the place into a sea of fire, they will not simply die as they are. As the saying goes, even a worm will wriggle if you step on it—will they not fire at us whatever weapons they have made, poor as they may be?

Therefore we must ask for help: "Lord, give us peace and resolve this matter well."

God who moves the hearts of kings

The Scripture says, *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes" (Proverbs 21:1)*. It means that God moves the hearts of those men. If the president of our country commands, "Open the floodgates of the dam—open them all in one go at full power," they must be opened. Can they not be opened? Even if one says, "It will become a sea of water and we shall die," if he says open them, they must be opened without condition.

Since the king's heart is said to be like the rivers of water, who moves the hearts of the kings of this world? God moves them. The hearts of leaders, the hearts of the guides of the church, the hearts of those who go before—who moves them? God moves them. Dear fellow believers, do you understand this? Though they seem to act on their own feelings, it is not so. You

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may think, “If I were in that seat I would not do so,” but it is not so. The heart of man is a truly strange thing—one cannot govern it at will.

Therefore we must pray that God will move the hearts of those men. We must pray that He will give them a heart that loves and pursues peace, so that they do not start a war but reach agreement well, attain what they aim at, and desire to live well. That is the content of our prayer.

For that, our own hearts must first be made so. Only when there is a heart that truly asks help and desires peace and wants no war does it become prayer and receive an answer; moving the lips alone does not make it so. Our Lord was so as well. He prayed with all His heart: *“Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42).*

I believe that war breaking out in our country is not yet God’s will. Plainly it is not God’s will, not our Lord’s will. Even so, God’s people must pray. With an earnest heart that desires peace we must ask for help. The Lord works among us so that we hold such a heart. Then we must pray to the Lord.

The Lord who prayed so earnestly that His sweat became like drops of blood

For this work the Lord also prayed so earnestly that His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. “If it is possible, let this cup pass. Yet not My will, but the Father’s will be done,” He prayed earnestly. And having prayed, He reached His conclusion. He concluded, “It is fitting that it be done according to the Father’s will,” and said, “Then I will do so.” And He went to the disciples. Since the Lord prayed so earnestly

at about a stone's throw away, would that sound not have reached the disciples? Hearing the sound of His crying out, the disciples sorrowed, grew weary, and fell asleep.

So the Lord said, *"Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation" (Luke 22:46)*. Temptation means meeting hardship. You and I can meet many hardships. We can meet the hardship of war, the hardships of the life of faith, and hardships that come through our own weakness. Over that weakness of ours we must ask God's help from the heart. This is prayer.

The Lord could have done as He willed; even as the Son He could have gone against the Father's will, yet He did not go against it but obeyed. Therefore the Lord, carrying the sin of the world He had taken on through the baptism received from John the Baptist, was crucified, accomplished everything, died, and rose again. From then on, all mankind—who before had not even known that Jesus is the Son of God the Father and had not worshiped Him—indeed every creature God has made, things visible and invisible alike, came to kneel before the Son and worship Him as Lord, as God, as King of kings and Lord of lords. This was the Father's will.

Therefore, that we praise and worship the Lord is not wrong in the least. It is a thing wholly fitting to the Father's will. I know you each have your personal subjects of prayer as well. And we have subjects to pray for as a church. We must pray also for the flower-calyx business.

When the life of faith settles into routine, one soaks into it unawares

Dear fellow believers, when a person stays long in one place, the heart often grows slack. For a good while I did not move the

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ministers about. As far as possible I left each in his place, hoping that each would overcome such things himself and resolve them by faith. But what are the hearts of our ministers and workers like? They are like sweet potato vines.

The sweet potato is sprouted at home and set out as seedlings, and when the rain comes the vines grow and stretch on and on along the ridge of the sweet potato patch. Then under the ground, by the working of photosynthesis and the nourishment of the soil, the sweet potatoes begin to grow. But as the vine runs along the high part of the furrow, here and there along the way it puts down small rootlets. The true root is only one, at the place first planted; but the vine, as it stretches, sends down rootlets and fixes them in the earth. And drawing nourishment from the soil at those points along the way, it keeps stretching on.

So when the sweet potato leaves grow too lush, the sweet potatoes cannot grow large. The nourishment should be sent down to the root, but the vine sucks it up for itself and spends its strength only on growing vine. So the truly skilled farmer, when the vines have grown a little, takes hold of their ends and lifts the runners clear, so that the rootlets put down along the way cannot cling to the ground. Taking care that the main root is not pulled up, he lifts them briskly clear. When he keeps lifting them like that, the sweet potatoes under the ground grow very large, they say.

The hearts of our workers are like that. When the life of faith settles into routine, one grows used to it unawares. One's habits of living soak into it, and staying long in one place, one becomes versed in everything. One comes to know it all—this must be done this way, that person should do that. Then one comes to pursue how one's own flesh may live comfortably. That is neither growth of faith nor serving the Lord. One ends up studying, "How shall my flesh live well?"

You have learned well on your own, without my teaching, and you are doing well. But those who of themselves lift and clear their own sweet potato vines are not many. Knowing that this is so, we should say, "Ah, I have sunk too far into routine," and examine our own hearts once in the life of faith. When we examine the heart, we can tell: "There is something perfunctory in my life of faith now—or there is not."

Only prayer that gives the heart receives an answer

Dear fellow believers, prayer is lifting the heart up to God. Without the heart, it is no more than prayer of the lips. Only when the heart is in it does it become prayer and receive an answer; done with the mouth alone, it is only muttering to oneself. As the Lord said, *"Do not use vain repetitions" (Matthew 6:7)*, prayer that does not give the heart is prayer that desires nothing from the Lord. But in prayer that asks help from the heart there is expectation, because the whole heart has been given.

So the Lord told the disciples also to pray that they might not enter into temptation. He spoke to all the disciples, but to Peter in particular He said, *"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail" (Luke 22:31–32)*. He was saying: now the Devil is stirring up your heart, and you cannot know how you may go wrong, so pray—and I have prayed for you.

Pray the prayer of intercession for one another

This prayer of intercession is greatly needed. Praying on

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behalf of another is called intercession. When we pray for the matters of the church and for each brother and sister one by one, each for the other, that prayer is lifted up and much help is received. If we were told to pray only for our own affairs, there would not be so much to pray for. After a little, there is nothing more to say. To continue in prayer without ceasing, we must look to our own matters, but also look to the matters of the church family, praying for them, "Help them," and asking the Lord to help the work of the church as well. When we pray like that, the life of prayer continues long.

Therefore I hope you will not become people who pray only for themselves. If one lives and prays only for oneself, everything the church does comes to feel like a bother. "Why must it be done that way? If we gather once on the Lord's Day and hear the word, that is enough—why gather on Wednesday and Friday too? One service on the Lord's Day should do—why meet again morning and evening? And when we meet, why not stand up, give the word briefly, and be done—why say again what was said before, and repeat it?" To the person who lives only for himself, the word sounds that way.

I preach like this, but the One who actually works is the Holy Spirit. In the Holy Spirit's sight there are many people who truly need this word. So I speak of it as I go about, and preach this word to the church as a whole. Therefore we must pray for the church and for God, for the church's business and the preaching of the gospel, for the souls overseas and for the flower-calyx business. It is fitting also to pray for the work each of us bears, for the farming, the livestock, the marketing, the work of each department, and the health of the members.

I hope you will live such a life of faith and such a life of prayer. Do not pass by just because you yourself are comfortable, but pray. Let us do so. I close the message. ✉

◇ 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.

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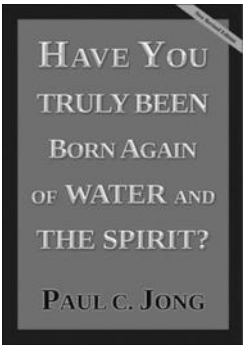
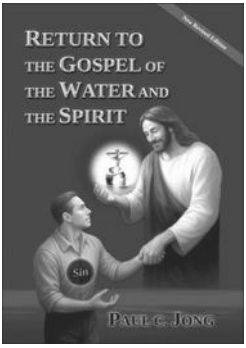
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

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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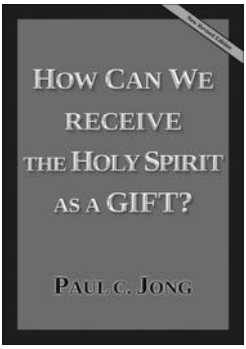
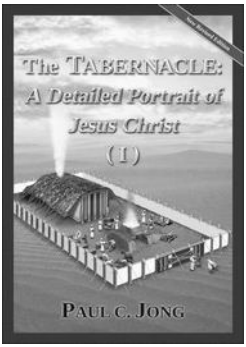


In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and 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]



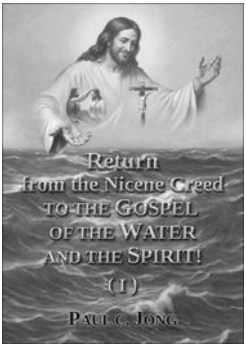
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

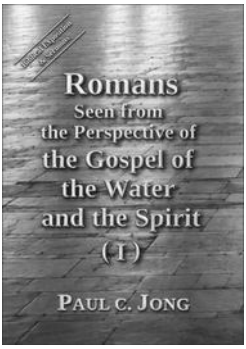
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

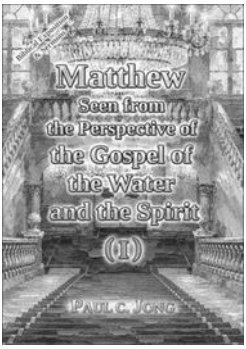
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



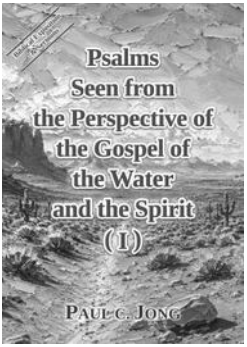
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Psalm seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)

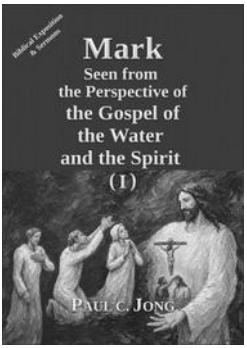


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who is to come.

This book is a biblical exposition that unfolds the Psalms from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. David's songs are not an outpouring of emotion but the confession of a righteous man who has received the remission of sins, a prophetic praise that looked up to the Christ who is to come. The blessing, righteousness, and peace of the Psalms do not come from human goodness but from the salvation God accomplished in Christ.

Beneath it all flows a single gospel. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus took our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the cross, and rose from the dead to make us righteous. When you open the Psalms with this gospel, the old songs come alive as your own confession, and this book leads you to the blessed place of those clothed in the righteousness of God.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



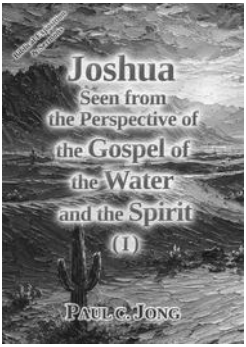
Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Joshua Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)

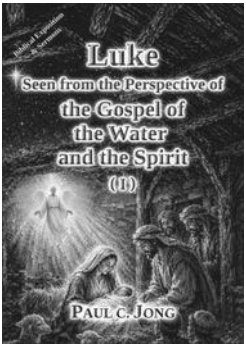


The Book of Joshua is often read as the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan and its victories in war. But the heart of Joshua chapters 1 through 12 is not human courage or strength; it is God's salvation. It shows how God leads sinners across the Jordan into the land of promise and makes them enjoy the remission of sins and true rest.

This book explains Joshua chapters 1 through 12 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. From the death of Moses and the crossing of the Jordan to the fall of Jericho and the defeat of the kings of Canaan, Joshua points to Jesus Christ the Savior. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from death to complete salvation.

Discover the true victory that is obtained not by human strength but by believing the Word of God. Lay down your own righteousness, rise again from failure, be united with the Church of God, and walk boldly in the rest and the spiritual inheritance God has already given.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)

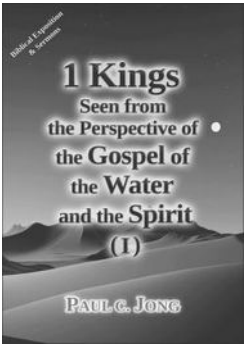


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central 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!

1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

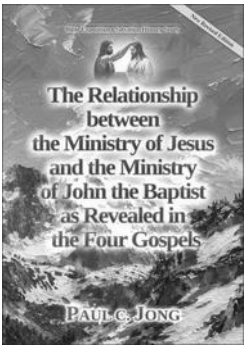


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures forever.

This book reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the Temple and its furnishings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Do not rely on your own wisdom and your own kingdom. Use the wisdom, wealth, and time you have received for the gospel and for souls, and serve Jesus Christ as the King of your heart, building the house of God.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

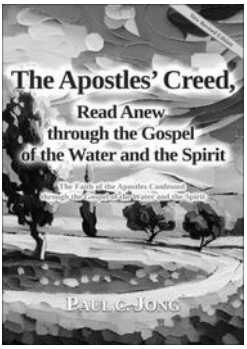
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

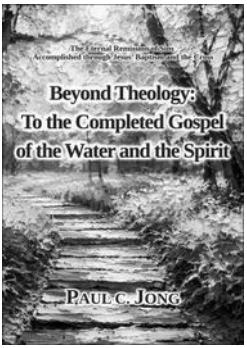


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

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THE NEW LIFE MISSION
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Sincerely,
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Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 100-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

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

The Gospel of Luke, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." (Luke 21:33)

We must believe now and receive the remission of sin, and live as those who are watchful and prepared. Deceivers arise, rumors of wars, earthquakes, and famines are heard, and the cares of this life weigh heavily on our hearts. But the Lord says, "Do not be terrified." Instead, tribulation becomes an occasion to testify to the gospel, and in that day the Holy Spirit gives us words and wisdom that our adversaries will not be able to contradict.

This book teaches the hope of the resurrection in a world that says there is no resurrection, the way of service in a world that seeks to lord it over others, and the faith that watches and prays in a world that trusts in its own strength. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, receive the remission of all their sins and can stand before the Son of Man.

Our resolutions and our will may be as weak as Peter's. But by believing in Jesus Christ, who is God and who has saved us from all our sins, we can rise again at any time. To hope for the resurrection and for the Lord who will come again, to hold fast to the written word even in hardship, and to serve the gospel entrusted to us to the end—this is the faith of those who are prepared and waiting for the Lord.

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