
Biblical Exposition & Sermons
Matthew
Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit
(II)
Paul C. Jong



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

Biblical Exposition & Sermons



Hephzibah

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24)

The righteousness of God is not a righteousness that man produces with good deeds and religious labor. It is the perfect salvation Jesus accomplished by taking on all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and then rising from death.

Therefore, to seek the righteousness of God is not to make further efforts to make oneself righteous, but to believe in the salvation the Lord has already accomplished, exactly as the Word says.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a condition for receiving salvation; it teaches how the person who believes in the righteousness God has given ought to live. Lay down your own righteousness, believe the righteousness of God fulfilled through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and become a wise person who has built the house of faith on the rock of this gospel.

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

PAUL C. JONG

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

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

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

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

PAUL C. JONG

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Preface

Matthew chapters 5 through 8 show what kind of faith and life Jesus Christ requires of the people of the kingdom of heaven, and that He is Almighty God who rules over sin, disease, demons, and all the things of nature. The Sermon on the Mount is not simply a lesson telling us to live morally good lives. It is the word for the people of the kingdom of heaven, teaching with what faith the person who has first received the remission of sins by the righteousness of God serves God and how he ought to live in this world.

This book is the second Bible study textbook in this series, expounding Matthew chapters 5 through 8 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. People try to become righteous by keeping the word of God with their own fleshly efforts, but the Law instead reveals the sin inside the human heart. Before the Law we discover that we are sinners who are angry and hate in our hearts, who harbor lust and greed, and who seek our own profit and glory. Therefore, what the person who wants to enter the kingdom of heaven needs first is not to establish his own righteousness, but to know and believe the righteousness God has fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

Jesus received all the sins of the world onto His own body through the baptism He received from John; He bore the judgment of sin by carrying those sins and dying on the Cross shedding His blood; and He became our everlasting Savior by rising from death. Only the person who has received the remission of sins by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit can call God Father and live following the word as one of the people of the kingdom of heaven.

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The word of the kingdom of heaven delivered in Matthew chapters 5–8

Matthew chapter 5, as the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, speaks of the Beatitudes, the eight blessings. The blessing promised to the poor in spirit and to those who mourn is the grace given to the person who admits that there is no righteousness in him to present to God and who seeks God's salvation. Jesus called the people of the kingdom of heaven who have received the remission of sins the salt and the light of the world, said that He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it, and, by exposing as sin even anger, lust, false oaths, and the desire for revenge, made it clear that no one can fulfill the Law by his own works. The Sermon on the Mount thus makes us realize the sin of our hearts, and at the same time shows the life in which the children of God who have received the remission of sins are reconciled with their brothers, speak truthfully, and love even their enemies.

Matthew chapter 6 speaks of the charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting of the people of the kingdom of heaven, and of material life and worry. Jesus turned our eyes away from righteousness meant to be seen by men to the Father who sees in secret, and gave the Lord's Prayer as the model of prayer to the children who, having received the remission of sins, have come to call God Father. He also told us to lay up treasures not on earth but in heaven, and to believe in God who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, casting away worry and seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness. The person who has already received the remission of sins does not ask for the remission of sins again as though receiving a new salvation every day; he tells his Father his wrongs, sets them right, and lives as a child.

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Matthew chapter 7, as the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, has us discern true faith from false faith. Jesus first told us to remove the plank from our own eye, made us believe in the Father who gives good things to those who ask, seek, and knock, and told us to enter not by the wide gate that leads to destruction but by the narrow gate that leads to life. And He concluded by telling us to discern by their fruits the false prophets who come out in sheep's clothing, and to become people who hear the word, do it, and build their house on the rock. Not the person who calls with his lips, Lord, Lord, but the person who does the will of God the Father enters the kingdom of heaven, and that will is first of all to believe rightly in the salvation the Son has accomplished.

Matthew chapter 8 is the chapter in which Jesus, having finished the Sermon on the Mount, displays the divine authority worthy of that word. Jesus made the leper clean, healed the centurion's servant with only a word, and Himself took our infirmities. He also rebuked the great tempest and made it calm and released the demon-possessed with the word, showing that He is the Son of God who rules even over sin, disease, nature, and the power of Satan. Leprosy shows the nature of sin, which begins inside the human heart and cannot be cleansed by one's own strength; yet Jesus did not turn away from such sinners but touched them Himself and made them clean once for all.

Faith built on the gospel of the water and the Spirit

To understand the words of Matthew chapters 5 through 8 rightly, we must not confuse the life of the people of the kingdom of heaven with the way to become the people of the kingdom of heaven. A person does not become one of the people

of the kingdom of heaven by keeping the words of the Sermon on the Mount perfectly. The Law and the Sermon on the Mount reveal the sins in the heart and make us realize that we cannot become perfect before God by our own works. But God did not end with condemning sinners; He Himself prepared the perfect way of salvation: the sinless Jesus received all the sins of mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore their punishment by dying on the Cross shedding His blood, and overcame the power of sin, death, and Satan by rising from death. It is the person who has received the remission of sins by believing this salvation who lives with the Sermon on the Mount as the standard of his life.

The Cross is not the place where the sins of mankind first passed to Jesus; it is the place where He was judged for the sins He had already taken on. If we believe only in the blood of the Cross without the transfer of sin, we cannot fully know what sins Jesus bore and was judged for. The testimony of the water, the blood, and the Spirit cannot be separated from one another. Sin was transferred to Jesus in the way God appointed; Jesus bore the punishment of that sin on the Cross; and the Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is the true and perfect righteousness of God.

The person who believes this gospel with his heart is no longer a sinner but a righteous person without sin. He prays calling God his loving Father; he gives, prays, and fasts looking to God who sees in secret; he does not serve riches as his master but seeks first the kingdom and the righteousness of God. He also discerns false teachings and walks the narrow way of life, builds the house of his faith on the rock that is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and with that faith is reconciled with his brothers, loves his enemies, and lives as the salt and the light of the world.

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The structure of this book and how to read it

This book first surveys the overall flow of each chapter of Matthew 5 through 8, then explains in detail the meaning of the verses and expressions, and includes sermons that help apply the word to today's life of faith, together with questions and answers that review what has been learned. Please first read the Scripture text of each chapter slowly, follow the flow of the word through the exposition of the text, and then, through the sermons and the questions and answers, engrave its meaning on your own faith and life.

As you read this book, do not receive the Sermon on the Mount as a new law for establishing the righteousness of your own works. First discover your sins and weaknesses before the word of God, and believe the righteousness of God fulfilled by Jesus Christ. And after receiving the remission of all the sins of your heart, rely on the Lord who saved you, obey the word, and live a life of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to other souls.

I hope that everyone who reads this book becomes poor in spirit, believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, receives the complete remission of sins, seeks first His kingdom and His righteousness as a child who calls God Father, and stands firm on the rock of the gospel in any tempest. I earnestly pray that every reader becomes a wise worker who, as the salt and the light of the world, preaches the gospel of life to the souls still under the power of sin, death, and Satan, and I give all the glory to the Triune God who has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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CHAPTER

5

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Matthew Chapter 5

< Matthew 5:1-48 >

“And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ‘Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. ‘You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ‘You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. ‘Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle

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will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 'You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny. 'You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members

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perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ‘Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery. ‘Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. ‘You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. ‘You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you

shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect."

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 5 is the first chapter of the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus taught His disciples and the crowds on a mountain the heart and life of the people of the kingdom of God. Through the Beatitudes, Jesus declares that those who depend on God and seek righteousness, mercy, and peace are blessed. He then calls His disciples the salt and light of the world and reveals the true meaning of the Law down to the dimension of the heart, motives, and relationships. He warns against anger, lust, irresponsible divorce, false oaths, and retaliation, and at the end He tells us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us.

1. The eight blessings of the kingdom of God (verses 1–12)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

Those who are poor in spirit are those who acknowledge that they have no righteousness or merit of their own to present before God and who seek the grace of God. Those who mourn do not take lightly their own sins or the evil and suffering of the world, and they seek comfort and restoration from God.

Meekness is not helplessness; it is the attitude of not wielding one's own strength recklessly but entrusting oneself to the will of God. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness earnestly desire not their own honor but the fulfillment of the righteousness and justice of God.

The merciful actually look after the weaknesses and pain of others. The pure in heart cast away hypocrisy and falsehood

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and look to God with an undivided heart. Peacemakers restore broken relationships without abandoning the truth and lead people to be reconciled with God.

Persecution for righteousness is not the blame one receives because of one's own wrongdoing but the persecution one receives for following Jesus and the righteousness of God. Jesus promised the kingdom of heaven and a great reward in heaven to such people.

2. The salt and light of the world (verses 13–16)

"You are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13) means that the disciples must hold back the corruption of the world and display the good will of God. Salt losing its flavor warns of a disciple losing his mission by following greed and falsehood just like the world.

"You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14) means that faith is clearly revealed in actual life. A disciple's honesty, love, and service are not for boasting about himself; they appear as a light that leads people to see his good works and glorify God the Father.

3. Jesus, who came to fulfill the Law (verses 17–20)

"'Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

Jesus did not disregard or abolish the Law. He Himself fulfilled the will of God and the promise of salvation revealed in the Law and the Prophets. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world; by receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross and rising from death, He completely fulfilled the righteousness of God that the Law demands.

"Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20) does not mean that we must keep more rules of the Law or live better than the scribes and Pharisees. Human beings cannot achieve the perfect righteousness God requires with their own works and efforts. The righteousness better than that of the scribes and Pharisees is not a righteousness human beings produce but the righteousness of God that Jesus completed. Therefore, to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must not rely on our own righteousness but obtain the righteousness of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

4. Anger and reconciliation (verses 21–26)

Jesus said that the root of murder lies in the anger, contempt, and insults of the heart. Even if one has not actually committed murder, the heart that regards another person as a worthless being, hating and insulting him, is sin before God.

"Leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:24) shows that worship and human relationships cannot be separated. If we have realized our own wrongdoing, we must not put off the conflict but go first and seek reconciliation.

5. Lust and the temptation of sin (verses 27–30)

"Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28) shows the fact that the sin of adultery begins in a person's heart before the act. Because human beings are born with sinful hearts, they cannot completely remove the lust that arises in

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their hearts with their own will and efforts alone. Through these words, Jesus makes us realize the root of sin within us and reveals that everyone is a being who must be saved from sin.

The words about plucking out one's eye and cutting off one's hand do not mean actually mutilating the body. Even if the eye or the hand is removed, the root of sin in the heart does not disappear. These words are a powerful warning that makes us realize how fearsome sin and its judgment are and shows the fact that human resolutions and efforts cannot solve the problem of sin. Therefore, we must not rely on our own will and deeds but believe in Jesus Christ, who saved us from all sins.

6. Divorce and the responsibility of marriage (verses 31–32)

Jesus said that writing a certificate of divorce does not make all responsibility toward one's spouse disappear. Marriage is not a relationship that can easily be severed according to one's own convenience and feelings; it is a covenant made before God. These words rebuke the attitude that used formal procedures to justify irresponsible divorce.

7. Truthful words rather than oaths (verses 33–37)

Jesus told us not to cover falsehood with oaths or to try to make people believe our words by them. People put forward oaths to hide the falsehood and distrust in their hearts, but heaven, the earth, and even their own lives are all under the sovereignty of God. Therefore, no oath can turn false words into true words.

"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'" (Matthew 5:37) means that we should not dress up our words with oaths but speak truthfully before God. Because falsehood and

exaggeration come out of the human heart, no one can become a perfectly truthful person by his own resolution alone. Saints who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must acknowledge their own weakness and speak truthfully according to the word of God. We must say that what is right is right and that what is not is not, and live so that our words and deeds agree.

8. Laying down personal retaliation (verses 38–42)

The law of *"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"* was originally a principle that restrained retaliation from growing greater than the harm received. But Jesus told His disciples to lay down the right of personal revenge and not to repay evil with the same evil.

The core of the words about the cheek, the garments, and forced accompaniment is not to enlarge hatred and retaliation in order to protect one's pride and rights. This does not mean neglecting crime and violence or giving up the victim's safety and social justice; it is a teaching not to carry on the vicious cycle of evil out of personal vengefulness.

9. Loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us (verses 43–48)

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

Loving one's enemies does not mean approving their evil as right or drawing near to them without any discernment. It is refusing to repay evil with evil and praying to God that they may turn from their wrongdoing. But man's natural love easily stays only with those who love him and treat him well. The words of Jesus expose this limited human love and its

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fundamental limits.

God makes His sun shine on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. Jesus told His disciples not to stop at loving only those who love them but to pray even for their enemies.

"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Here, perfection does not mean religious flawlessness displayed to be seen by people. It refers to the perfect love of God the Father, who loves even His enemies, going beyond the limited human love that loves only those who treat one well. These words show the fact that we must realize our own insufficiency and limits before the perfect love of God.

The core meaning of Matthew chapter 5

First, the blessings of the kingdom of God lie not in the wealth and power of the world but in a heart that depends on God and a life that seeks righteousness, mercy, and peace.

Second, as the salt and light of the world, disciples glorify God through honesty, love, and service.

Third, Jesus did not abolish the Law but made its meaning completely clear by applying it even to the heart and motives.

Fourth, God sees not only outward acts such as murder and adultery but also the sins of the heart such as anger, insults, and lust.

Fifth, true worship goes together with efforts to be reconciled with one's brother, responsibility in marriage, and truthful words and honest relationships.

Sixth, disciples lay down personal revenge, overcome evil with good, and pray for their enemies and for those who persecute them.

Seventh, the words of Matthew chapter 5 reveal how

insufficient man's outward righteousness is, and they show the direction of the true righteousness that the people of the kingdom of God must pursue in their hearts, words, and relationships.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 5 is the chapter in which Jesus taught the Beatitudes, the mission of salt and light, the true meaning of the Law, reconciliation, purity, and truthfulness, and the love for one's enemies that goes beyond retaliation, thereby making clear that the righteousness of the people of the kingdom of God must appear not in outward appearance but in a life of heart, relationships, and love.

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

Matthew chapter 5 is not a chapter that teaches how a person is saved by accumulating good deeds. It reveals that the standard of the Law reaches not only actions but even the anger, lust, falsehood, and hatred of the heart, showing that no one can stand before God by his own righteousness. At the same time, it teaches with what heart and life those people live who have believed in the righteousness of God, which Jesus would accomplish by taking upon Himself all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John and by completing it through the Cross and the resurrection.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the water means that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist; the blood means that He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross; and the Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is the truth of God.

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Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel become sinless children of God, and the Holy Spirit comes upon them and leads them to live according to the words of the Sermon on the Mount.

1. The Beatitudes are not the price of salvation but the heart that receives the gospel and the appearance of a saved life (verses 1–12)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

Those who are poor in spirit are those who know that they have no righteousness within themselves to present to God. Because they acknowledge that their own prayers, good deeds, and keeping of the Law cannot remove the sins of their hearts, they can accept the righteousness God gives. The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection are the gift of salvation given precisely to sinners who have laid down their own righteousness like this.

Those who mourn are those who agonize over their sins and seek the remission of sins. Such people receive true comfort when they believe the word that all their sins have been washed away by the gospel. The meek do not insist on their own thoughts but accept the word of God as it is, and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness believe in the righteousness of God and preach that righteousness to other souls.

The merciful pity the souls that are under judgment because they do not know the gospel, and they preach the word of salvation to them. Peacemakers preach the gospel to those who have become enemies of God because of sin and lead them to be reconciled with God. Those who are persecuted for righteousness are those who suffer hardship not for their own stubbornness but because they preach the righteousness of God

and the gospel.

2. The reason the pure in heart see God (verse 8)

"Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

The human heart cannot become completely pure through moral efforts or repeated prayers of repentance. Only when sin has been passed on to Jesus and even the judgment of that sin has been completed does sin disappear from the heart. The heart becomes pure when we believe the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of our lifetime through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and paid their price on the Cross.

The pure in heart are not people who claim that they never commit any sin. Their flesh is still weak, but because they believe the word that all their sins were passed on to Jesus and that even their judgment has been completed, they can serve God with their conscience and receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

3. Being the salt and light of the world is the mission of those who have received the gospel (verses 13–16)

Salt holds back corruption, and light brightens the darkness. Those who have received the remission of sins preach the gospel as the salt and light of the world and serve the work that pleases God. If they keep the salvation they have received only for themselves and live only after the desires of the world, they lose the taste of salt and the role of light.

Good works are not merits for obtaining salvation. They are the fruit borne when a person already saved by grace serves other souls and lives in honesty, love, and sacrifice. Preaching the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the

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resurrection, and living for that gospel, is what shines the light of the gospel in the darkness.

4. Jesus, who did not abolish the Law but fulfilled it (verses 17–20)

"'Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17).

The Law shows the holy standard of God and makes people realize that they are sinners. But the Law itself has no power to wash away sin. Jesus did not do away with the Law; He fulfilled it completely by taking upon Himself all the responsibility for sin that the Law demands and by being judged for it.

Because Jesus took over the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and paid the wages of sin in full on the Cross, the righteous requirement of the Law was completely satisfied. The resurrection shows that this salvation has been completed.

"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20).

The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was a righteousness built up by their own works. But human works cannot remove even the anger, lust, and falsehood of the heart. The righteousness better than theirs is not a righteousness people make by trying harder; it is the righteousness of God, which Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection and gives to those who believe.

5. The true standard of the Law, which exposed even the sins of the heart (verses 21–37)

Jesus said that even those who have not murdered have already harbored the root of murder if they are angry with their brothers and insult them. He said that even those who have not committed the act of adultery have committed adultery in their hearts if they harbor lust. Not even outward procedures like certificates of divorce and oaths can cover the sins and responsibilities of the heart.

The words about plucking out one's eye and cutting off one's hand do not mean solving sin by mutilating the body. Even if the eye and the hand are removed, the heart that produces sin remains. These words make us take sin with utmost seriousness, and they make us realize that human beings are complete sinners who cannot solve even the sins of their hearts by their own efforts.

Before such a Law, people must acknowledge that they are sinners and seek and believe in the salvation God has accomplished. Because Jesus took upon Himself all the sins committed with the heart, thoughts, and deeds through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, those who believe this fact are washed of even the sins of their hearts.

6. A life that lays down retaliation and loves its enemies (verses 38–47)

The words that tell us to turn the other cheek to the one who strikes us, to go two miles with the one who compels us to go one mile, and to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us are difficult to practice perfectly with the nature of the flesh.

These words are not a condition telling us to obtain salvation by such deeds. They are a teaching that those who

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have freely received the remission of sins and mercy from God should also show mercy to others, lay down personal revenge, and overcome evil with good. Even the saved are lacking because their flesh is weak, but they go on practicing this love with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Loving one's enemies does not mean approving their evil as right or leaving crime and violence unattended. It is laying down personal hatred and vengefulness and praying in the hope that they will turn from sin and be saved.

7. The words telling us to be perfect as our Father is perfect (verse 48)

"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

A sinner cannot become perfect like God by his own deeds. These words first reveal that human righteousness cannot reach God's standard. But those who believe in the righteousness that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection are washed of all their sins in Christ and are acknowledged as perfectly righteous.

Those who have received the righteousness of God as a gift like this do not love in order to be saved; they love because they have already been saved. Following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they grow into a life of being reconciled with their brothers, speaking truthfully, not taking revenge, and pitying even their enemies. Perfection is not a human boast; it is the standing of having received the righteousness of the perfect God and the direction of living worthy of that grace.

The core meaning of Matthew chapter 5

First, the Beatitudes are not conditions for man to obtain salvation by works; they are the heart that lays down its own

righteousness and accepts the gospel, and the spiritual fruit that appears in those who have been saved.

Second, the Law exposes as sin not only people's actions but also their anger, lust, falsehood, and hatred, showing that no one can be saved by his own righteousness.

Third, the righteousness better than that of the scribes and Pharisees is not human good deeds but the righteousness of God, which Jesus Christ completed with the water, the blood, and the Spirit and gives to those who believe.

Fourth, those who have received the remission of sins preach the gospel as the salt and light of the world and practice mercy, peace, truthfulness, and love.

Fifth, loving one's enemies and living a perfect life are not the price paid to obtain salvation; they are the fruit of faith that appears in those who have been saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have received the Holy Spirit.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 5 is the chapter that makes clear that the Law exposes even the sins of the heart so that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven by human righteousness, and it teaches that those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of God, which Jesus gave through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, should embrace the heart of the Beatitudes and live as the salt and light of the world. ✉

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Matthew Chapter 5

Jesus taught the righteousness of God and the life of the righteous

Introduction

Matthew chapter 5 is the chapter in which Jesus went up on a mountain and taught His disciples the blessings received by the people of the kingdom of heaven and the life of the righteous. The Beatitudes are not conditions for man to obtain salvation by perfecting eight virtues. They show that those who acknowledge that they have no righteousness of their own and long for the righteousness of God receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and the kingdom of heaven by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that afterward, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they bear the fruits of meekness, mercy, purity, and peace and endure even the persecution they receive because of the gospel with the hope of heaven.

Jesus declared that His disciples who had received the remission of sins were already the salt and light of the world, not people who should strive to become salt and light someday. The righteous preach the truth of the gospel accurately without corrupting or hiding it, and they display the life of the gospel through a life of honesty, love, and service. Its purpose lies not in receiving praise for themselves but in leading those who are in the darkness of sin and death to be saved and give glory to God the Father.

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Jesus came not to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them completely. Jesus had all the sins of mankind passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again on the third day, thereby fulfilling both the justice of the Law and the promises of salvation of the prophets. People obtain the righteousness that is better than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees and enter the kingdom of heaven by believing not in the righteousness of their own works but in the righteousness of God accomplished by Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not confine murder to the act alone but revealed that even the anger and contempt of the heart are sin, and He taught that adultery also includes not only the outward act but even the lust harbored in the heart. He also told us to cast away false oaths and personal retaliation, to speak truthfully, to love our enemies, and to pray for those who persecute us. These words reveal that human beings cannot reach God's perfect standard by their own strength, and so they lead us to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Those who have received the remission of sins do not keep these words as conditions for obtaining salvation. The righteous who have already been made perfect by the righteousness of God live in gratitude for the grace that saved them—being reconciled with their brothers, keeping away from lust and falsehood, choosing forgiveness instead of revenge, and pitying even their enemies. Matthew chapter 5 teaches those who have become the people of the kingdom of heaven through the gospel of the water and the Spirit to live as the salt and light of the world, displaying the righteousness and love of God the Father.

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The Beatitudes are not a method for man to obtain salvation by completing eight conditions; they show the blessings given to those who acknowledge their spiritual poverty and receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the fruits of life the Holy Spirit makes them bear

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:1–12).

Seeing the multitudes, Jesus went up on a mountain and sat down, and His disciples came to Him. As the King of heaven, Jesus taught what the faith and life of the people of the kingdom of God are like. The Beatitudes overturn the human way of thinking that takes worldly success, wealth, and honor as the standard of blessing, and they show what kind of person God calls blessed.

These words must not be interpreted as eight steps for being

saved or as virtues that man must perfect. They do not mean that God gives the kingdom of heaven only when a person first lives perfectly poor, meek, pure, and peaceable. They are words that begin with realizing one's own sin and inability and accepting the salvation of God, and that extend to the character and life the Holy Spirit accomplishes in those who have received the remission of sins.

"*The poor in spirit*" does not refer simply to those who have little property or live in hardship. Being materially poor does not automatically bring one into the kingdom of heaven, nor does having property exclude everyone from it. Poverty of spirit is the heart that acknowledges the fact that it has no righteousness or merit of its own to present before God and that it cannot solve its sin by its own strength.

Those who are poor in spirit do not boast of their religious careers and good deeds. They realize the fact that even keeping the Law and repeating prayers of repentance cannot remove all the sins of the heart, and they ask God to solve their sin. They are people who know that the things of the world cannot satisfy the soul and who earnestly long for the remission of sins and the kingdom of heaven.

"*Theirs is the kingdom of heaven*" does not mean that poverty of spirit itself becomes a merit for salvation. It means that those who have laid down their own righteousness can accept the salvation God gives. Those who admit that they are empty-handed receive by faith the remission of sins and the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ gives freely.

"*Those who mourn*" are those who do not take lightly their own sins and the reality of a world fallen in sin. Their hearts ache when they realize how they have harmed others with their words and deeds and how they have lived against God, following their own desires. Those who know the fact that they

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cannot escape the judgment of God because of sin come to long for true comfort.

But mournful tears and regret are not the price that washes away sin. Sin does not disappear because one has wept much, nor is agonizing for a long time a condition of salvation. The comfort God gives to those who mourn over sin is the gospel that Jesus actually took those sins upon Himself, was judged for them, and removed them.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took all our sins—past, present, and future—upon His own body. By bearing those sins, being crucified, and dying with His blood shed, He received the punishment of sin in our place, and by rising again on the third day, He became the everlasting Savior. When they believe this fact, those who mourned over sin receive the Lord's true comfort: "I have taken all your sins upon Me and have been judged for them."

"The meek" does not refer simply to those who speak softly or have passive personalities. Meekness is the attitude of breaking one's own stubbornness before the word of God, acknowledging that His word is right, and accepting it by faith. It is obeying the way of salvation God has established and the path of life, without rejecting His word just because it differs from one's own thoughts.

Nor is meekness the weakness of unconditionally enduring injustice and abuse and saying nothing. It is the strength to keep the truth and depend on God without crushing others with one's own anger and violence. Believers can make the facts known, protect the weak, and seek justice, even while not repaying evil with evil.

The words that the meek *"shall inherit the earth"* must not be interpreted as a guarantee of obtaining much real estate and property right now. When God completes His kingdom,

believers will inherit the renewed kingdom together with Christ. On this earth, too, they carry out by faith the place and mission God has entrusted to them, but their final inheritance is in the everlasting kingdom of God.

The righteousness sought by *"those who hunger and thirst for righteousness"* is not a righteousness people build up by their own efforts but the righteousness God Himself has accomplished. Sinners realize that they have no righteousness at all, and they earnestly yearn for the salvation Jesus Christ completed, as if eating and drinking it, and accept it by faith. God makes those who believe in the gospel righteous people without sin.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took over all the sins of mankind; with the blood of the Cross He paid the price of those sins; and with the resurrection He completed salvation. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with their hearts are filled not with their own works but with the righteousness of God. The sins of their hearts are completely washed away, and they receive the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, believers long for righteousness. Instead of chasing only the satisfaction of their own flesh, they do the work that pleases God and want to preach the righteousness of God to those who do not yet know the gospel. When they see a soul receive the remission of sins through the gospel, they enjoy a joy and satisfaction that worldly success cannot give.

"The merciful" are those who know the fact that they themselves were sinners who would have been judged had it not been for the mercy of God. Seeing the sins and weaknesses of others, they do not boast that they are more righteous, but look upon them as people who must receive the same salvation.

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Mercy is not approving sin as right; it is the heart that does not stop at condemning sinners but seeks the way to save them.

This does not mean that we can buy the remission of sins from God by showing mercy. Because God first pitied us and saved us by grace, we also come to show mercy to others. Those who have received mercy show mercy, and in their lives they also experience God's continual care and mercy.

"*The pure in heart*" are not people from whom no evil thought ever arises thanks to their self-discipline. As long as human beings are in the flesh, they have weaknesses and can do wrong. The fundamental purity of the heart is the state of having one's sins washed away by believing in the gospel that Jesus took all sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and was judged on the Cross.

Those who have received the remission of sins must not turn the truth of the gospel that there is no sin in their hearts into an excuse for indulging in sin. Following the reproof of the Holy Spirit, they acknowledge their wrongs and turn from them, and they depend on the word so that their hearts are not dragged back to the desires of the flesh. A pure heart displays both the sinlessness obtained through the atonement of Jesus and the heart that seeks to live truthfully according to the Holy Spirit.

That the pure in heart see God does not mean seeing the form of God with the eyes of the flesh; rather, they come to know the will and heart of God through the word and the Holy Spirit. They realize what God delights in and what He hates, and they walk with Him by faith. In the coming kingdom of God, they will see the Lord even more fully.

"*The peacemakers*" are not people who mix truth and falsehood as convenient in order to avoid conflict. True peace begins when those who have become enemies of God because

of sin are first reconciled with God by believing in the atonement of Jesus Christ. The temporary peace felt while sin remains unsolved is not fundamental peace with God.

Those who have been reconciled with God by believing in the gospel preach the same way of salvation to others as well. They tell them the fact that Jesus took their sins, too, upon Himself through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation through the Cross and the resurrection, and so they help sinners come to peace with God. Among people as well, they serve by faith so that relationships may be restored with forgiveness and truth, casting away falsehood and prejudice.

The words that peacemakers shall be *"called sons of God"* do not mean that they buy the qualification of God's children with acts of peace. They mean that those who have already become children of God by believing in the gospel are acknowledged as worthy of being God's children because they display the Father's peacemaking character.

"Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake" does not refer to those who are criticized because of their own rudeness and wrongdoing. Nor should anyone claim to be persecuted for speaking the truth after attacking and wounding others. Those who suffer disadvantage, hatred, and rejection because they have believed in and preached the righteousness of Jesus and the gospel and have lived honestly are the ones who belong here.

Jesus spoke of being reviled and persecuted and having evil things falsely said against us *"for My sake."* Persecution suffered because of Christ and the gospel has a reward in heaven. Salvation is received not as the wages of works but by grace, yet for the labor and suffering borne for the Lord after being saved, there is a reward that God gives.

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The words *"Rejoice and be exceedingly glad"* do not mean enjoying pain and abuse or deliberately seeking out dangerous situations. Those who are persecuted may seek safety, make the facts known, and ask for rightful protection. These words simply tell us not to despair, because the world's judgment is not the final verdict, and because of the hope that God knows the truth and will repay with an everlasting reward.

The prophets, too, were persecuted while proclaiming the word of God. Therefore, even if we meet opposition because of the gospel, it does not mean we have been forsaken by God. Yet not all opposition is automatic proof that we are right, either. Believers must examine honestly before the word whether they are really suffering for the gospel and righteousness or have caused conflict through their own stubbornness and wrongdoing.

The Beatitudes show the image of Jesus most perfectly. Jesus humbled Himself, mourned for sinners, and meekly obeyed the will of the Father. He completed the righteousness of God, had mercy on sinners, and bore persecution and the Cross to make peace between God and sinners.

The Holy Spirit comes upon those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Spirit displays the character of Jesus in their lives, making them bear humility of spirit, mourning over sin, meekness before the word, longing for the righteousness of God, and mercy, purity, peace, and the faith that endures persecution. Such fruits do not produce salvation; they reveal in life the salvation already received.

Matthew 5:1–12 shows that those who acknowledge their spiritual poverty without any righteousness of their own and long for the righteousness of God receive the kingdom of heaven, comfort, and the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that under the guidance

of the Holy Spirit they display meekness, mercy, purity, and peace and endure even the persecution they receive because of the gospel with the hope of heaven. The true blessing of the Beatitudes is not a condition of the world; it is the blessing of having received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and the kingdom of heaven in Jesus Christ.

Jesus declared that His disciples who had received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit were already the salt and light of the world, and He told them to hold back the corruption of sin and falsehood with the gospel and good works and to lead people to God

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:13–16).

After speaking the Beatitudes, Jesus declared to His disciples, *"You are the salt of the earth"* and *"You are the light of the world."* He did not tell them to work hard so that they might become salt and light someday. He was speaking of the standing and mission already given to the disciples who believed in Jesus Christ and followed Him.

The disciples did not become salt and light by their own character and ability. Originally they, too, were people under sin and darkness. They became the salt and light of the world

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because Jesus first came to them, saved them, and entrusted them with the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, the basis of this identity is not human superiority but the grace of God.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of all mankind, including the disciples. By bearing those sins, being crucified, and dying with His blood shed, He paid the price of sin in full, and by rising again on the third day, He became the perfect Savior. Those who have received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit are established as the salt and light that preach the gospel in the world.

Salt seasons food and slows down corruption. When Jesus called His disciples the salt of the earth, He did not mean that they were originally cleaner or better than the people of the world. He meant that, because people who possess the true gospel that washes away sin exist in the world, the corruption of sin and falsehood is exposed, and the way of salvation can be preached to dying souls.

Even as science, culture, and the economy develop, the world cannot solve the sin in the human heart. However affluent and orderly it may look on the outside, greed, hatred, falsehood, lewdness, and pride keep coming out of people's hearts. Law and education can restrain evil behavior to some extent, but they cannot completely wash away the sins of the heart.

The power that fundamentally solves sin is in the gospel of Jesus Christ, accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. When people believe the fact that Jesus took all sins upon Himself and was judged for them, they receive the remission of sins,

receive the Holy Spirit, and live in new life. Preaching this gospel to the world is the most important role of salt.

Salt does not boast of itself; it goes into food and brings out flavor. Likewise, believers do not exalt their own names and merits but go in among people and serve with the gospel and love. Insisting on the truth only with words while despising and wounding others is not carrying out the mission of salt rightly.

Jesus warned, asking how salt could be made salty again if it loses its flavor. This warns of the situation in which those who have received the remission of sins lose the function of salt by hiding the truth of the gospel entrusted to them or by compromising with the falsehood and desires of the world. If they corrupt the core of the gospel and live no differently from the world, it becomes hard for people to trust their testimony.

Speaking only of the blood of the Cross while leaving out Jesus' taking of sins from the gospel, or adding man's repeated prayers of repentance and good deeds to the perfect atonement of Jesus, blurs the taste of salt. The baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection must be preached accurately as one complete salvation. The truth of the gospel must not be mixed with human religious thoughts.

The words about salt losing its flavor and being thrown out and trampled must not be taken to mean that salvation is revoked as soon as good deeds fall short. Salvation is received not by human works but by faith in the atonement Jesus completed. Rather, it is a solemn warning that if the saved abandon the gospel and the mission of their lives, they can lose spiritual influence and trust in the world, fail to be used in the work God has entrusted, and suffer shame.

This warning does not permit the thought that one may live however one pleases because one has received the remission of sins. Those who have received the Holy Spirit must clearly

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know the fact that their words and deeds affect the credibility of the gospel. If they keep compromising with falsehood, greed, and injustice while preaching the gospel only with their mouths, people may misunderstand even that gospel as false.

Jesus then said, *"You are the light of the world."* The source of light is originally Jesus Christ. A disciple is not a being who produces light by himself but a person who shines into the world the light of life and of the gospel received from Jesus. As the moon shines by receiving the light of the sun, believers display the righteousness and love of Christ.

Light does not merely speak words that rebuke the darkness; it actually brightens the darkness. It does not stop at pointing out what sin is but proclaims how Jesus removed that sin. If the Law exposes people's sins, the gospel of the water and the Spirit lights up the way of salvation in which those sins have been completely washed away.

A city on a hill can be seen even from afar and cannot be hidden. The life of a person who believes in Jesus likewise cannot stay only in a secret realm completely separated from the world. His family, workplace, and neighbors watch his words and deeds and observe what fruit the gospel he believes bears in his life.

These words do not mean that believers should show themselves off to draw people's attention. A city on a hill is visible not because it boasts of itself but because it is naturally revealed by its location. Likewise, when believers do not stage themselves to look special but serve the gospel with honesty and love in the place given to them, that light appears.

The *"basket"* in verse 15 refers to a vessel that measures quantities of grain. If a lamp is lit and then covered with such a vessel, the light is blocked and can go out. A lamp must be set on a lampstand so that it gives light to everyone in the house.

The gospel God has given must likewise not be hidden away only in one's own heart but must be preached so that people may hear and believe.

The vessel that hides the gospel can be fear. Worrying about being rejected by people or looking strange, we may fail to speak the truth of salvation. Fearing the loss of possessions or honor, we may blur the core of the gospel or compromise by saying that all religions are ultimately the same. But if the light is covered, those in darkness cannot see the way of salvation.

Yet this does not mean forcing the gospel on others rudely without considering their circumstances. Light shines not to attack people but to let them see the way. Believers must listen to and understand others, and without hastily condemning them, explain sin and the way of salvation clearly and kindly through the words of the Scriptures.

Preaching directly with words is not the only way to shine the light of the gospel. We can teach the word, write it down, or translate and deliver it, and we can also serve with our time, talents, and possessions so that the gospel may spread. A life of caring for the suffering, working honestly, and protecting the weak also supports the light of the gospel.

Jesus said to let people see the disciples' *"good works."* At the center of good works is the work of preaching the gospel that saves sinners. Nothing gives a soul more fundamental benefit than helping a person know and believe in the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection and so receive the remission of sins.

Yet good works must not be understood narrowly as gospel preaching alone. Keeping promises honestly, caring for those in need, not hating one's enemies, apologizing when one has done wrong, and faithfully carrying out one's duties are also fruits of the light. When the words of the gospel and actual life

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go together, people can see the truthfulness of that testimony more clearly.

Good works are not merits for obtaining salvation. It is not that people wash away their sins and become children of God by living good lives; rather, they first receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel Jesus Christ completed. Good deeds are the fruit in which the salvation already received and the life of the Spirit appear in one's living.

Jesus did not say to make people praise and exalt the disciples. He said to let people see the disciples' good works and "*glorify your Father in heaven.*" The final purpose of light lies not in making believers' names famous but in displaying how righteous and loving God is.

Staging good deeds to be seen by people is different from shining light so that people can see. The former is hypocrisy that seeks one's own praise; the latter is living truthfully so that glory goes to God. Even with the same action, whose glory one seeks is what matters.

If a believer's good works stand in front of the gospel and end up boasting only of human goodness, the direction of the light has gone wrong. It must not end with the appraisal "What a fine person he is," but lead to the confession "How good is God, who saved and changed that person." For this, believers must acknowledge the fact that even their good deeds were made possible by the grace of God and the help of the Holy Spirit.

The role of salt and light is not entrusted only to a few pastors or evangelists. Jesus said "*You*" to all the disciples who followed Him. Though each one's office and abilities differ, all believers who have received the remission of sins have received the mission of displaying the gospel right where they are.

The church, too, must not try to shine its light by gaining worldly power and honor and dominating people. It must preach the truth of the gospel clearly, serve the weak, be honest in finances and work, and display love and justice in words and deeds. It must be a community that shows the way of life in the darkness, not a community that imposes power.

Carrying out the mission of salt and light does not mean that one must do everything alone. Those who preach the gospel directly and those who support that work from behind, those who teach the word and those who care for neighbors in need, can be united with one another. The Holy Spirit gives each person different gifts and places, yet He makes them all participate in the one ministry that gives glory to God.

Matthew 5:13–16 shows that the standing and mission of being the salt and light of the world have been given to those who have received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Believers must preach the gospel accurately without corrupting or hiding its taste, and display the life of that gospel through the good works of honesty, love, and service. Through this, those who were in the darkness of sin and death come to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved, and they give glory to God the Father, who saved believers and established them as light.

Jesus did not abolish the Law but completely fulfilled the righteousness of God

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

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Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17–20).

Jesus said clearly that He had not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. The Law displays the holiness and justice of God, and the words of the prophets promise and prophesy how God would save sinners. Jesus came not to nullify these words but to fulfill Himself the will of God and the promise of salvation contained in them.

The Law makes clear what sin is and shows God's just standard that the wages of sin is death. Through the Law, people learn the good will that they should love God and love their neighbors, but at the same time they come to realize that they are sinners who cannot fully keep those words. The Law can expose people's sins, but it can neither take those sins upon itself in their place nor wash them away.

That Jesus fulfilled the Law does not mean that He turned sin into something that is not sin or overlooked sinners without any price. The law of God demands judgment for sin without fail. Jesus fulfilled the justice of God perfectly by taking upon Himself, in sinners' place, the curse and judgment of the Law that sinners deserved.

The Son of God was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came to this earth in the sinless body of a man. Then, through the baptism He received from John, He took upon His own body all the sins that mankind commits throughout their lifetime. Just as the sins of a sinner were passed on to an unblemished sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the

atonement sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sins of everyone in the world were passed on to Jesus.

Bearing the sins He had taken upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus was crucified and died shedding His blood. The Cross was not the place where He first took on sin but the place where He received the punishment of the sins He had already taken upon Himself. According to the Law's requirement that the wages of sin is death, Jesus was judged in the place of sinners and so paid the price of sin completely.

Jesus was buried and rose again on the third day. The resurrection is the proof that the price of sin was paid in full and that the power of sin and death was defeated. Therefore, the coming of Jesus was not an event that ignored the Law but the event in which He took on all the responsibility for sin that the Law demands and achieved the salvation the prophets had prophesied.

Jesus said, *"Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."* The word of God does not vanish because times change or because people do not believe it. The word that God judges sin is fulfilled without fail, and the promise that He will save us from that sin is also fulfilled without fail.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the justice and love of God appear together. God did not declare sinners righteous while leaving their sins as they were. He dealt with sin justly by having Jesus take on sin through the baptism He received from John and receive the punishment of that sin on the Cross. At the same time, He displayed the love of salvation by laying on His Son the judgment that sinners deserved.

Therefore, a sinner must not accept only one of the two—the Law or the gospel. He must first acknowledge the fact that

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the Law declares him a sinner to be judged. And he must also believe the gospel as it is—that God has completely removed all his sins through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Those who do not acknowledge the Law cannot know why they need a Savior. On the other hand, those who hold only to the condemnation of the Law and do not believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished end up in despair or hypocrisy while trying to solve their sins with their own works. Only when people acknowledge together the sins the Law has exposed and the righteousness of God the gospel has completed can they receive the true remission of sins.

In verse 19, Jesus said that no one should break even one of the least of the commandments or teach others to do so. This does not mean that a person is saved by keeping the commandments perfectly as his merit. Salvation is not a reward earned by practicing the Law but a gift received by believing in the righteousness of God that Jesus completed.

But the fact that we have been saved by grace is not permission to disregard the word of God and live however we please. Those who have received the remission of sins are no longer people who keep the Law in order to escape condemnation and be saved. Because they have become children of God, they are people who respect the Father’s good will and live in obedience to His word.

To break the commandments and teach others to do so is to erase or weaken the word of God to suit one’s own circumstances and desires. Teaching that, being saved, one need not love God and may treat one’s neighbors carelessly is a misuse of the grace of the gospel. Jesus not only saves sinners but also leads the saved by the Holy Spirit to live worthy of the will of God.

One who does and teaches the commandments is not a legalist who boasts of his own works. He knows that with his flesh he cannot practice the word of God perfectly, but he acknowledges in his heart the fact that the word of God is right and obeys with the help of the Holy Spirit. Living according to the word himself first, he also teaches others the right gospel and the will of God.

Even those who have received the remission of sins can do wrong because of the weakness of the flesh. But they do not justify their wrongs with the gospel or abolish the commandments of God. They acknowledge their wrongs before the word, believe the fact that Jesus took even those sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, and turn back so as not to repeat the same wrongs, living uprightly.

Such obedience is not a transaction for obtaining salvation. It is the fruit of faith that serves God with gratitude because all sins have already been remitted. People cannot practice the word of God perfectly with their own will and ability alone, but the Holy Spirit, who dwells in those who have received the remission of sins, leads them to regard the word of God as right and choose a righteous life.

In verse 20, Jesus said that unless one's righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, one can by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. The scribes and Pharisees studied the Law, kept the outward ordinances thoroughly, and displayed a godly appearance before people. But their righteousness was a human righteousness built up with their own works and religious merits.

They cleansed their bodies outwardly and kept many ordinances, but they did not fully acknowledge the sin and hypocrisy in their hearts. Nor did they accept that Jesus was the Savior sent by God. They could look more godly than others,

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but because they held on to their own righteousness and rejected the righteousness of God, they could not enter the kingdom of heaven with that righteousness.

The righteousness better than that of the scribes and Pharisees is not a righteousness made by doing a few more good deeds than they did or keeping the Law more strictly. It is the righteousness of God, fundamentally different from any righteousness made by human works. It is the perfect righteousness that Jesus gives to those who believe, having taken on all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and completed it through the Cross and the resurrection.

The righteousness of one's own works always remains insufficient. Even if one lives well today, one can sin tomorrow, and even while acting rightly on the outside, evil thoughts and desires can arise in the heart. But the righteousness of God accomplished by Jesus does not change according to a person's state or feelings. This is because Jesus took on all the sins of mankind—past, present, and future—and paid their price completely.

Those who believe in this gospel do not claim to have become people without any blemish in the flesh. Their flesh is still lacking, but because they believe the word that all their sins were passed on to Jesus and that even their judgment has been completed, they become righteous people who have received the remission of sins before God. This is the righteousness of God that is better than the works-righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

Therefore, Matthew 5:17–20 is not a word telling us to enter the kingdom of heaven by our own strength through diligently keeping the Law. It is a word telling us to acknowledge our sin and inability before the Law and to

believe that Jesus completely fulfilled the demands of the Law and the promises of the prophets through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

At the same time, these words teach that those who have received the remission of sins must not take the commandments of God lightly. Salvation is not received by works, but the saved live lives that display to their neighbors the love they have received from God, preach the gospel, and obey the word. True faith casts away human righteousness, accepts the righteousness of God, and goes on to do the will of God in gratitude for that grace.

Matthew 5:17–20 shows the fact that Jesus completely fulfilled the justice of the Law and the prophets' promise of salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that people enter the kingdom of heaven by believing not in the righteousness of their own works but in the righteousness of God given by Jesus Christ, and that after receiving the remission of sins they must do and teach the word of God following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus revealed that even the hatred harbored in the heart is sin and opened the way of perfect reconciliation

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there

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remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny" (Matthew 5:21–26).

Speaking of the sixth commandment, *"You shall not murder,"* Jesus made clear the fact that the standard of the Law does not stop merely at the act of actually taking a person's life. People may think themselves righteous because they have not committed murder, but God examines even the anger, hatred, and contempt that arise in the heart before they appear in action.

The root of murder is contained in the heart that is angry with one's brother, regards him as worthless, and insults him. Even if one has not actually killed anyone, if in one's heart one hates another person and wants to erase him from one's life, God exposes even that sin of the heart. The Law judges not only outward actions but even the state of the heart that produces sin.

The anger Jesus spoke of must not be understood to mean that we should stay silent even when we see every wrong. Calling evil evil and rebuking to correct wrongs can be necessary. But hating another person because one's pride has been hurt, disregarding him as a person, and treating him as if he deserved judgment is not the anger that accomplishes the righteousness of God.

Saying *"Raca!"* or *"You fool!"* is not a matter of merely faulting a syllable that comes out of the mouth. The contempt and hatred contained in such words are the problem. The heart that does not see a person as a being God created but lowers

him into something useless and worthless appears through the mouth as insulting words. Jesus said that even the sin of words, which people take lightly, is under the judgment of God.

People can avoid murder outwardly and yet deeply wound others with their hearts and words. One cannot claim to be sinless just because one has not laid a hand on anyone. Destroying another person's honor with slander, curses, and insults, harboring old grudges, and wishing for another's misfortune are also sins that come out of the heart.

Before these words, no one can claim to be righteous by his own works. Even without committing actual murder, people are angry and hateful in their hearts and harm their brothers with their words. There is no one who can keep his heart, words, and deeds perfectly without committing such sins even once in his lifetime. The words of Jesus make us realize that we are not merely somewhat lacking but complete sinners who cannot reach God's righteous standard by our own strength.

The purpose of the Law does not lie in making people hide their sins and pretend to be righteous with religious deeds. The Law shines its light even on the sins hidden deep in the heart and makes people lay down their own righteousness. Only those who admit that they are sinners who cannot escape judgment before God come to seek truthfully the salvation God has prepared.

It is impossible for people to remove all the anger and hatred of their hearts and be saved by their own works. That is why the sinless Son of God came to this earth in the body of a man. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins that mankind commits with the heart, words, and deeds. Our sins of anger, hatred, contempt, and insult were also laid on the body of Jesus at that time.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist,

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Jesus had the sins of everyone in the world passed on to Him. This does not mean that Jesus committed sin Himself; it means that He, the sinless One, took over the responsibility for the sins that were on sinners. Bearing the sins thus passed on to Him, Jesus was crucified and died shedding His blood, and so received in sinners' place the judgment they deserved.

Jesus was buried, rose again on the third day, and overcame the power of sin and death. Therefore, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching by which people reach salvation by polishing their own hearts clean. It is the gospel of believing with the heart in the salvation Jesus completed by taking over sin and receiving even the punishment of that sin.

In verses 23 and 24, Jesus said that if, while offering a gift at the altar, we remember something for which our brother holds a grievance against us, we should leave the gift as it is, first be reconciled with our brother, and then come back and offer it. These are words that the worship offered to God and the life lived toward one's brother must not be separated from each other.

People may try to cover the wrongs they have done to their brothers on the grounds that they offer religious gifts, pray, and serve. But worship does not automatically remove the responsibility for having hated and wounded others. God values a truthful heart and reconciliation more than outward gifts.

Rather than what our brother has done wrong to us, the passage says, *"Remember that your brother has something against you,"* making us think first of the grievance we have left with our brother. Before questioning only the other person's faults, we should look back on what wounds and grievances we have left with him. If our own fault is clear, we must not avoid responsibility with excuses but first admit it,

ask for forgiveness, and set right the damage as far as possible.

Reconciliation is not approving as right what is not true or conveniently covering over all responsibility. It is admitting wrongs as they are, bearing the necessary apologies and responsibility, and restoring the broken relationship rightly. If the other person is also at fault, that too must be dealt with within the word; but true reconciliation cannot be achieved by condemning only the other person without first looking back on one's own responsibility.

Reconciliation with God, too, is not achieved by human religious gifts or good deeds. A person with sin cannot be reconciled with the holy God by himself. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins that stood between God and man, and He paid the price of those sins completely on the Cross. When sinners believe in this salvation, they are reconciled with God and become righteous people without sin.

Those who have freely received the remission of sins from God must display to their brothers the mercy they have received. If one believes that all one's own sins have been remitted and yet holds on to a brother's fault to the end and hates him, that cannot be called a life worthy of the grace of the gospel. Looking to the Lord who completely removed their sins, the saved must apologize first, forgive, and strive to achieve reconciliation.

In verse 25, Jesus said to agree quickly with one's adversary while on the way with him. Still being on the way means that the opportunity to solve the problem remains. Once one has been handed over to the judge, the verdict has been given, and one has been thrown into prison, one cannot undo the matter at will. Therefore, when we realize our wrong, we must not delay but resolve it quickly.

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People may think that a problem will disappear by itself as time passes. But unresolved hatred and resentment can grow deeper in the heart, and a small quarrel can spread into a great dispute. When the Holy Spirit makes us realize our wrong, the wise attitude of faith is to seek reconciliation first, without making excuses or putting it off.

These words also contain a warning about the final judgment. While they are alive, people must believe in the salvation God has prepared and solve the problem of sin with the gospel. After death and judgment have come, no one can change the verdict on sin by putting forward his good deeds and religious zeal. Now is the time of grace when we can believe in the gospel and be reconciled with God.

The expression in verse 26, *"You will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny,"* shows how strict God's judgment on sin is. God does not judge only the sins people consider big. The anger, insults, lies, and evil thoughts that people regard as trivial are also sins, and the price of all those sins must be paid completely.

But people cannot pay the price of their sins in full by themselves. Even if they do many good deeds, offer gifts, and pray prayers of repentance over and over, the sins they have already committed do not disappear. Since the price of sin is death, sinners cannot escape judgment if they try to pay that price themselves, and if even a penny's worth of sin remains, they cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Jesus paid this hopeless price of sin in our place. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of mankind passed on to Him, and by dying on the Cross shedding His blood, He paid the price of those sins without leaving a single one. Had the sins not been passed on to Him, there would have been no reason for Him to be judged

in our place; but because He took over the sins of the world, He died in the place of sinners.

Those who believe in this gospel do not try to pay the debt of sin with their own efforts. They believe the word that Jesus removed all their sins—their original sin and actual sins, the sins of the past, the present, and the future. Since Jesus paid the price of sin down to *"the last penny,"* no sin that must be judged remains in the hearts of those who believe.

Even those who have received the remission of sins can get angry and wound others because of the weakness of the flesh. At such times, they must not hide or justify their wrongs but acknowledge them before the word, apologize to the other person, and set the relationship right. And instead of trying to wash away their sins again with their own prayers and tears, they must confirm again the gospel that Jesus took even those sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John.

The perfect remission of sins is not permission to indulge in anger and insults at will. Rather, it is a new start from which, having been freely saved from the fearsome judgment of sin, we can show mercy to others instead of condemning them rashly. The Holy Spirit reproves the hearts of the saved and leads them to turn from their wrongs and achieve reconciliation and love.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had even our sins of hatred, anger, and insult passed on to Him, and He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. Those who believe this fact do not put forward their own righteousness; remembering that they themselves were saved entirely by grace, they deal with the weaknesses of others.

Matthew 5:21–26 does not confine murder to the actual act but exposes even the anger, contempt, and insults of the heart as sin, making clear that no one can escape judgment by his

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own works. At the same time, it teaches us to be reconciled with God by believing that Jesus solved even the last penny's worth of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and, after receiving the remission of sins, to live in prompt reconciliation with our brothers as well.

Jesus exposed even the lust of the heart as sin and saved sinners to be perfectly righteous

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 'Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 5:27–32).

"*You shall not commit adultery*" is the seventh of the Ten Commandments. People may think they have kept this commandment if they have not actually committed the act of adultery. But Jesus did not limit the standard of the Law to outward actions; He revealed even the motives of the heart where sin begins.

Jesus said, "*Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has*

already committed adultery with her in his heart." Physical adultery does not spring up suddenly at some moment; it begins with harboring and nurturing lust in the heart. Since God knows even the thoughts and desires that other people cannot see, no one can claim to be without sin before God merely because he has not carried it into action.

The focus of the passage is not simply on the fact that a person of the other sex was seen. What is sin is looking at another person as an object to satisfy one's desire rather than respecting him or her as a person God created, and receiving that lust into one's heart and harboring it continually. The eyes look at the object, but it is the heart that holds on to the desire and enjoys it.

Jesus did not condemn only one sex by speaking of a man's lust toward a woman. These words apply to both men and women. Whoever makes someone who is not his or her spouse the object of desire and pictures and enjoys a lewd relationship in the heart has committed adultery in the heart.

These words demolish the thought that people can become righteous by their own works. Even those who have avoided actual adultery have never perfectly governed the lust that arises in the heart all their lives. However chaste people may look on the outside, lewd thoughts and desires arise in their hearts. Therefore, before God's perfect standard, no one can claim to be righteous on the strength of his morality and self-control.

The sins that defile a person do not come into the body from the outside; they come out of the heart. The lewdness, adultery, and greed in the heart appear in action through the eyes, the hands, and the body. Therefore, restraining only one's appearance and behavior for a while does not fundamentally remove the sins of the heart.

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In verses 29 and 30, Jesus said to pluck out the right eye if it causes one to sin and to cut off the right hand if it causes one to sin. These are words telling us not to take sin lightly but to take it seriously in connection with the judgment of hell. It is a warning that however precious and useful something may be to us, if it makes us sin, we must cut it off decisively.

But these words must not be applied literally and taken as a command to actually pluck out an eye or cut off a hand. Even if the eye is removed, the heart that produces lust remains, and even if the right hand is cut off, one can sin again through the left hand and other parts of the body. Mutilating the body can neither wash away the sins of the heart nor obtain salvation.

Jesus revealed the fact that people cannot become perfect before God by trimming their bodies and correcting their behavior. If anyone tried to fulfill the demands of the Law literally by his own strength, nothing of him would remain whole. This is because it is not a matter of the eyes and hands only; the whole human heart is under the rule of sin.

Therefore, people must not take their lust lightly or excuse it, but neither should they think that they can solve it completely with their own will and asceticism alone. The Law exposes even the lust of the heart as sin and makes people realize that they are sinners who cannot escape judgment by their own strength. That realization is meant not to lock people in despair but to make them seek the Savior God has sent.

The sinless Son of God came to this earth to cleanse those whose hearts were defiled with sin. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins that mankind commits with the heart, thoughts, and body. Not only adultery actually committed but even the lust harbored in the heart and all the sins enjoyed in secret were laid on His body.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist,

Jesus had the sins of everyone in the world passed on to Him. That the sins were passed on to Him does not mean that the sinless Jesus Himself did evil that would make Him a sinner. It means that He became the Lamb of God who took over all the responsibility for the sins that were on sinners and would be judged in their place.

Bearing the sins thus passed on to Him, Jesus was crucified and died shedding His blood. Since the wages of sin is death, once the sins had been passed on to Jesus, the price of death for those sins had to be paid. The Cross was not the place where He first took over sin but the place where He received in our place the punishment of the sins already passed on to Him.

Jesus rose again from the dead on the third day. The resurrection is the proof that the judgment on sin was completely finished and that the power of sin and death was defeated. Those who believe in this salvation do not wash away their sins of lust and adultery little by little with repeated prayers of repentance; they receive the remission of sins once and for all by believing the word that Jesus took away all those sins and was judged for them.

Acknowledging even the lust of the heart as sin does not mean examining one's thoughts every moment and being condemned endlessly. We must first admit the fact that sin comes out of our hearts, and believe that Jesus dealt with all those sins completely with the water and the blood. When people believe this gospel, all the sins of their hearts are remitted, and they become righteous people without sin.

Receiving the remission of sins does not mean that one may accept lust as it is and enjoy it. The perfect remission of sins is not an excuse that permits a lewd life but a new start that enables one to live purely according to the Holy Spirit. The saved must acknowledge the weakness of their flesh and

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decisively keep away from the surroundings, habits, and media that stir up sin.

The words about cutting off the right eye and the right hand also give the practical lesson not to regard lightly the things that provoke sin. It is not a right attitude to keep seeking out scenes that arouse lust while praying only that one's heart be kept clean. We must avoid the temptations that can be avoided, refuse to harbor lewd thoughts when they come in, and turn our hearts back with the word of God.

In that process, we must not make our own will the basis of salvation. When our resolve weakens and we do wrong, we must not despair as if we had become sinners again, nor try to wash away the sin with our own prayers and tears. We must believe again the gospel that Jesus took even that sin upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, acknowledge the wrong before the word, and turn back with the help of the Holy Spirit.

In verses 31 and 32, Jesus connected the problem of adultery to the marriage relationship as well. Marriage is not a contract people easily make and break at their convenience; it is a relationship in which two people have promised before God to be faithful to each other. If one treats one's spouse only as a means of satisfying one's desires and needs, the same self-centeredness as the adultery of the heart appears in married life as well.

The mere fact of having written a certificate of divorce does not make every act of casting off one's spouse righteous before God. Going through a legal procedure does not justify the greed, betrayal, and irresponsibility contained in the process. Jesus rebuked the practice of using the outward form of a certificate of divorce to forsake the faithfulness of marriage.

The passage clearly defines divorcing one's spouse "*for*

any reason except sexual immorality" as sin. Casting off one's spouse because one's heart has changed or someone better has appeared places the other person in danger of adultery, and whoever takes advantage of that wrongful breakup of a marriage also participates in adultery. Jesus did not permit marriage to be cast off lightly according to one's desires.

Nor does the presence of *"sexual immorality"* mean that divorce must necessarily follow. If the spouse who has sinned truthfully admits the wrong and turns from it, one can strive for forgiveness and the restoration of the relationship. But forgiveness does not mean making sin not sin, or unconditionally enduring repeated betrayal and violence. In actual situations, one must discern within the word, weighing true repentance, safety, and responsibility together.

Nor should the responsibility for divorce be laid uniformly on one party. The passage rebukes the responsibility of the one who unjustly casts off his spouse. Since the process and responsibility of a broken marriage differ in each case, no one should be condemned in the same way merely for the fact of having divorced. Yet if there is the sin of having destroyed the relationship with one's own desires and unfaithfulness, it must be admitted honestly.

Even those who have committed the sins of adultery and unjust divorce are not forever cast out of the gospel. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had even these sins passed on to Him and paid their price on the Cross. Those who admit their sins and believe in this perfect salvation have all their sins remitted and can begin a new life before God.

Receiving the remission of sins does not mean that all the practical responsibilities arising from one's wrongs disappear as well. One must apologize to the wounded spouse and family, set right the damage one has caused as far as possible, and

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change the direction of one's life so as not to repeat the same sin. Such turning is not the price of the remission of sins but the fruit of living worthy of the grace already received.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that saves only those who are perfect in the flesh. Even those who have harbored lust in their hearts and damaged relationships because of their desires can receive the remission of sins if they believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished. Yet this gospel does not make sin light; it makes us realize the seriousness of sin more clearly and leads us to live purely and faithfully under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 5:27–32 does not confine adultery to outward action but exposes even the lust harbored in the heart as sin, showing that no one can become perfect by human works. At the same time, it teaches that we become righteous not by human efforts to remove the eye and the hand or by religious deeds but by believing that Jesus removed all sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that after receiving the remission of sins we must keep away from lust and treasure the faithfulness of marriage and the dignity of other people.

Jesus taught us to cast away oaths that rely on falsehood and to speak truthful words

"Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'

For whatever is more than these is from the evil one" (Matthew 5:33–37).

Jesus first mentioned the words handed down to those of old: *"You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord."* If one has sworn before God, one must keep it without fail, and making people believe one's words by borrowing the name of God with no intention of keeping them is the sin of using the name of God in vain.

Because people are not truthful in their everyday lives, they add oaths to make their words believed. Feeling that people would not believe them if they simply said "It is so," they drag in heaven, the earth, and even the name of God to insist that they must be right. But if one's words are truthful, there is no need to dress them up with grand oaths.

Using the form of an oath does not change falsehood into truth. Even if a person calls God as his witness or mentions holy things, if the content is false, it is still false before God. Rather, the sin becomes even heavier because the authority of God has been used as a means of guaranteeing one's falsehood.

Saying *"Do not swear at all,"* Jesus told us not to swear even by heaven, by the earth, by Jerusalem, or by our own heads. People may think they can avoid responsibility if they swear by heaven or by Jerusalem without directly mentioning the name of God. But heaven is God's throne, the earth is His footstool, and Jerusalem is the city of the great King, so none of them is unrelated to God.

Nor is it fitting for a person to swear by his own head. A person has no authority to determine at will even the natural color of a single hair of his head. Jesus was not speaking about temporarily changing the outward color with dye; He meant that human beings have no power to govern even their own life, growth, and aging.

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It is arrogance for a person who cannot even govern his own tomorrow and his own life to swear, guaranteeing future things with certainty. Even when people promise with good intentions, circumstances may change or ability may fall short, and they may fail to keep their word. Therefore, we must acknowledge our limits, faithfully carry out what we have promised, and yet not speak as if we could control every outcome.

Jesus did not teach how to make the expressions of oaths more elaborate. He said, *"Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'"* The honesty of saying that what is right is right and that what is not is not is the speech of the people of the kingdom of God. A truthful person does not deceive others by blurring the facts for his own benefit or twisting his words into multiple meanings.

When we should answer *"Yes,"* we acknowledge it plainly; when we should answer *"No,"* we do not change the truth to please people. Speaking only what is favorable to oneself while deliberately hiding unfavorable facts, or speaking ambiguously so that the other person misunderstands, cannot be called truthful speech either.

The words of verse 37, *"For whatever is more than these is from the evil one,"* show that evil lies behind the words that depart from the truth of God. It is an evil thing to call wrong by human judgment what God has called right, and to change what God has said no to into a yes because of one's own desires.

From the beginning, Satan the Devil has tempted people not to accept the word of God as it is but to alter it by adding human thoughts. He raises doubts about what God has clearly said and presents what is contrary to His word as if it were more beneficial. When people exalt their own thoughts above

the word of God, the standard of right and wrong becomes not God but themselves.

Before these words, people discover how false and changeable their own words are. People lie to protect themselves, make excuses to hide their wrongs, and exaggerate to gain their own advantage. They take lightly the promises they have made to others, and they can tell the same fact differently depending on who is listening.

Even if one has not directly told a lie with one's mouth, if there was an intention in the heart to deceive about the facts, it is already falsehood before God. No one can be perfectly truthful in every word all his life without ever breaking it. Therefore, there is no one who can claim to be righteous before God on the strength of his honesty and keeping of promises.

The Law and the words of Jesus stop people's mouths and make them realize the falsehood in their hearts. Those who tried to become righteous by their own words and deeds come to admit before God's standard that they are sinners who cannot escape judgment. The Law can expose falsehood, but it cannot wash away that sin in their place.

That is why the Son of God, who is the truth, came to this earth to save sinners. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins that mankind commits with the heart and the mouth. Deliberate lies, unkept promises, and all the sins of exaggerating facts and trying to avoid one's responsibility were laid on the body of Jesus.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had the sins of everyone in the world passed on to Him. It was not that there was falsehood or evil in Jesus Himself; He took over the responsibility for the sins that were on sinners. The sinless Son of God became the unblemished sacrificial offering to stand in for sinners who had lied.

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Bearing the sins thus passed on to Him, Jesus was crucified and died shedding His blood. On the Cross, God's truthful word that the wages of sin is death was fulfilled exactly. God did not change sin into something that is not sin; He paid the price of sin completely by having His Son bear the judgment of that sin.

Jesus rose again from the dead on the third day. The resurrection is the proof that Jesus fulfilled exactly the salvation He had promised and overcame the power of sin and death. God does not lie; He is the One who fulfills without fail what He has spoken.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to accept the salvation of God just as He has spoken it, without adding one's own thoughts. If God has said that Jesus took away all the sins of mankind, believers acknowledge, *"Yes."* They do not look at their own feelings or deeds and change the word of God into a "No."

Teaching that sins are washed away only by daily prayers of repentance, even though Jesus removed all sins, is adding human works to the salvation God has completed. Conversely, claiming that one may keep on lying because one has received the remission of sins is also altering the meaning of the gospel. The remission of sins is received not by human works but by faith, yet the saved live truthfully following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

People are not assured of the remission of sins on the basis of their good deeds, prayers, and oaths. They believe the fact that Jesus took all their sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John and the fact that He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and rose again. Because the word of God is true, the truth of salvation does not change even when their feelings waver.

Since the gospel of the water and the Spirit is God's sure promise, there is no need for anyone to add a separate oath to it. It is enough to believe with the heart what Jesus completed and accept it, saying, "It is so." We are not saved by swearing our own resolve and loyalty; we receive the remission of sins by believing in the salvation God has accomplished.

The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have received the remission of sins. The Spirit leads them not to take falsehood lightly but to speak according to the facts. When their wrongs are exposed, He makes them admit their wrongs and bear the necessary responsibility rather than protect themselves with lies and excuses.

The saved are not always without fault in their words. Because of the weakness of the flesh, they may say things contrary to the facts or fail to keep their promises. At such times, they must not hide the wrong or cover it with a new lie but admit it as it is before God and the other person and set it right.

But they must not believe that their own confession and tears wash away sin again. They must believe the fact that Jesus had even that sin passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and confirm that the price of that sin was already paid on the Cross. Turning from one's wrongs and living honestly within faith in that gospel is right repentance.

A life of *"Yes, Yes"* and *"No, No"* does not mean a rude or thoughtless way of speaking. We must speak the truth but speak it in love, must not carelessly spread unverified facts, and must be careful with words that damage another person's honor. Honesty and love do not stand against each other.

These words must be followed in the family, at work, and in the church as well. We must not distort contracts and money

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matters to our own advantage, nor exaggerate the results of our work or hide our mistakes. Checking whether rumors or things seen on the Internet are true before passing them on as facts also belongs to truthful speech.

We must be all the more honest when preaching the gospel. We must not fabricate exaggerated testimonies or unverified miracles to draw people's attention. We must not change the word of God to suit our own denomination and interests, but preach the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit just as the written word says.

Matthew 5:33–37 teaches us to become truthful people who say that what is right is right and that what is not is not, instead of trying to guarantee our words with grand oaths. At the same time, it reveals that no one can become righteous by false and changeable human words, and it teaches us to receive the remission of sins by believing the word of God as it is—that Jesus removed all sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit—and then to live honestly following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus taught us to lay down retaliation and overcome evil with grace and mercy

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away" (Matthew 5:38–42).

The law of repaying *"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"* is not a word that permitted the injured to take greater revenge. It was a standard that prevented excessive revenge, such as repaying the loss of one eye with two eyes or a life, and had responsibility corresponding to the wrong charged fairly. It had the scope of damage and responsibility determined under public judgment, not personal feelings.

But people can use these words to justify their own anger and retaliation. They want to return to the other person a pain greater than the wound they received. Jesus exposed the heart that uses the Law as a tool of personal revenge.

The words *"not to resist an evil person"* do not mean calling evil good or leaving injustice as it is. Restraining crime, protecting victims, and holding people responsible through due process are necessary. The focus of the passage is on not returning the same evil out of hatred and vengefulness when we suffer personal insult or loss.

The words about turning the left cheek also when struck on the right are a teaching not to retaliate at once because one's pride has been hurt. If we repay the other person's violence with greater violence, the chain of evil continues. Jesus told us to break the loop of retaliation even at the cost of loss and to display the mercy that gives even the evildoer an opportunity to turn back.

Even so, these words must not be used as grounds for forcing victims of violence and abuse to remain in dangerous places. To protect their own lives and the lives of others, they may escape from danger and ask for help. Forgiveness and the renunciation of personal revenge are not the same as concealing crime or giving up necessary protection and accountability.

Nor do the words about giving one's cloak also to the one

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who sues for one's tunic mean that every demand to take away property is legitimate. They mean that we should not make our rights the absolute master of our lives but willingly bear the losses we can bear for the sake of the gospel and peace. Believers must avoid lying, quarreling, and tearing down their brothers to protect small gains.

The words about going two miles with the one who compels us to go one mile are a teaching not to stop at grudgingly performing only the minimum duty imposed on us. Even when we receive a demand that does not suit our will, if it is not something that makes us sin, we can serve further with a willing heart instead of complaint and hostility.

But it is impossible for people to practice these words perfectly at all times with the nature of the flesh alone. They may endure loss or show kindness once or twice, but it is hard to love to the end someone who repeatedly insults them and makes forced demands. Since anger, greed, and self-centeredness are in the human heart, no one can reach God's perfect standard by his own deeds.

The words of Jesus do not demand that human beings become moral heroes and be saved by their own strength. Rather, before the Law and these words, they make us realize that there is no true love and mercy within us. People must admit the fact that they are complete sinners and cannot escape judgment without the grace of God.

Jesus, who came to save sinners, did not teach the word about not retaliating with words alone. Though He was without sin, He gave Himself up to save sinners. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself all sins, including mankind's sins of anger, hatred, and revenge.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had the sins of everyone in the world passed on to Him.

This does not mean that Jesus Himself did evil; it means that He became the Lamb of God who took over the responsibility for the sins that were on sinners and would be judged in their place.

Bearing the sins thus passed on to Him, Jesus was crucified and died shedding His blood. People insulted Him, beat Him, and condemned Him unjustly, but He did not retaliate to preserve His own life. He received in sinners' place the judgment they deserved and obeyed the will of God the Father, who wanted to save them.

Jesus was buried, rose again on the third day, and overcame sin and death. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching in which one is saved by perfecting the training of enduring every slap on the cheek. It is the gospel of believing the fact that Jesus had all the sins of sinners passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation through the Cross and the resurrection.

Those who believe the fact that Jesus took all their sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John receive the remission of sins. It is not that they have become people in whom no vengeful feeling ever arises in the flesh; rather, because they believe the word that all their sins have been dealt with, they become righteous people without sin before God.

The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have received the remission of sins by believing the fact that Jesus had all sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. The Spirit leads their hearts not to take revenge by their own strength but to entrust judgment to God and to overcome evil with good as far as they can.

The saved can lay down retaliation because they, too, received the remission of sins without any merit. If those who

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have received mercy hold on to another person's small fault to the end and try to take revenge, that cannot be called a life worthy of the grace they have received. When we remember the grace of the Lord who removed all our sins, we can give the other person, too, an opportunity for forgiveness and turning back.

Forgiveness does not mean pretending that the wound never existed or having to trust the other person again immediately. If the wrongdoer does not admit his responsibility and repeats the same evil, one may keep an appropriate distance and seek help. Only, one must not harbor in one's heart the vengefulness that wants to destroy that person, and must entrust the final judgment to God.

The words *"Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away"* mean that we should not clutch our possessions only for ourselves but should have mercy on and help neighbors who are in real difficulty. If we think of everything we have received from God as only our own, we turn away even when we see the circumstances of someone in need. But those who have received grace know that their wealth, time, and strength have also been entrusted to them by God, and they gladly share them for the gospel and for their neighbors.

Nor must these words be interpreted as telling us to grant every demand unconditionally without discernment. If the money we give sustains sins such as gambling, addiction, or crime, or destroys our responsibility to care for our family, it may not be true help. There are times when it is more fitting to provide needed food or treatment instead of handing over cash as asked, and to seek together a way toward self-support. What matters is not a heart that coldly refuses for fear of losing wealth, but examining with love what will actually benefit the

other person.

Furthermore, giving and lending are not merits for obtaining salvation. One does not receive the remission of sins for having given much and endured loss well. However much people share their possessions and endure insults, they cannot remove with their own deeds the hatred, greed, and pride that arise in their hearts. Salvation is received only by believing in the righteousness Jesus accomplished, and sharing and serving are the fruit of faith that those already saved bear in gratitude for that grace.

Therefore, no one should try to become perfectly righteous merely by outward training in keeping these words. Thinking that one can become perfect by forcing a smile after being slapped, accepting unjust demands unconditionally, and giving away everything one has is turning the gospel into works. Jesus reveals that the human flesh cannot keep these commandments perfectly, so that people cast away their own righteousness and believe in the Lord who saves sinners completely.

Even after becoming righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the mind of the flesh hates loss and wants to repay the insults it has received. Even believers can momentarily lose their temper, assert their rights excessively, and turn away from someone who needs help. At such times, instead of hiding their failure or trying to offset it with good behavior, they must return to the word of the gospel that Jesus took even such sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John. And they must apologize to the person they have wronged, set right the damage where possible, and act again following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives the saved wisdom and strength and makes them lay down the determination to win every dispute. In the family, He keeps them from holding on to small wrongs

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for long and retaliating against their spouses or children; at work, He keeps them from repaying unjust words with the same insults. In the church, He makes them think first of the benefit of the gospel and the souls of their brothers rather than defending their own opinions and dignity. When necessary, He has them make the truth known and establish right order, yet act with love and restoration as the aim, not hatred.

Jesus did not retaliate against the sinners who opposed Him; to save them, He had all their sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. On the Cross He paid the wages of sin with His own blood and life, and through the resurrection He gave those who believe the perfect remission of sins and new life. The righteous who have received that grace do not try to seat themselves in the place of judging their enemies; believing in God's just judgment, they can do good.

Matthew 5:38–42 is not a word telling us to abolish the laws of the world and public justice; it teaches that disciples must cast away personal retaliation and greed and live with grace and mercy. At the same time, these words reveal that human beings are complete sinners who cannot achieve the perfect love of God by their own strength. When sinners believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, they receive the perfect remission of sins and become righteous. The righteous are not people who do good in order to save themselves; in gratitude for the salvation they have already received, they live choosing forgiveness instead of revenge, sharing instead of clutching, and willing service instead of resentment at compulsion.

Jesus told us to love our enemies and display the perfection of our Father

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:43–48).

The words *"You shall love your neighbor"* are a clear teaching of the Law God gave. But the sentence *"hate your enemy"* is not a direct command written in the Law of the Old Testament. The people of that time narrowed the scope of "neighbor" to their own people and those close to them, and interpreted it to mean that they might hate everyone else and their adversaries. Jesus corrected this teaching that the people had been hearing and widened the scope of neighborly love even to one's enemies.

It is easy for people to be kind to those who love and appreciate them. Conversely, toward those who criticize them, cause them loss, and persecute them, they grow angry and want to return the same pain. The people of the world, too, love those who belong to their own side, such as family and friends. Therefore, loving only those who treat us well does not display the special love of the people of the kingdom of God.

Jesus did not tell us merely to endure our enemies but to

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love them. Loving one's enemy is not refraining from outward revenge while wishing in one's heart for his failure and destruction. It is hoping that he will turn from evil, realize the truth, and be saved, and doing him practical good as far as possible. The words about praying for those who persecute us likewise do not mean praying that they be cursed; they mean asking God to give them an opportunity to repent and the grace of salvation.

Even so, loving one's enemies must not become a reason to approve evil as right or to conceal crime. We may protect victims, bring falsehood to light, and, when necessary, hold people responsible through due process. Love is not a feeling that abandons justice; it is the heart that hopes the other person will realize his sin and return to the right way. Believers must clearly oppose evil deeds, yet they must not hate the person's very soul or rejoice at his destruction.

God makes His sun shine on the evil and on the good alike and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. He does not immediately withdraw the daily sunshine and rain according to people's good or evil, but grants to all the general grace by which life can be sustained. This does not mean that God approves of evil; it shows His longsuffering and lovingkindness, which give even sinners time to turn back and an opportunity to live.

The words *"that you may be sons of your Father in heaven"* do not mean that one buys the qualification to become a child of God by the act of loving one's enemies. They mean that those who have received the remission of sins and become children of God display the Father's character by showing grace even to their enemies. As children resemble their father, those born again by the grace of God are not confined to those who benefit them but show mercy even to those who do not

deserve grace.

Even tax collectors love those who love them, and even Gentiles greet their own brethren. Human love usually moves according to interests, closeness, and repayment. It loves when the other person is good to it and withdraws its love when its expectations are betrayed. But the love born of God goes as far as doing good even to those from whom no reward can be expected and to those who oppose it.

The problem lies in the fact that people cannot sustain such love with the strength of the flesh. They can bear with an enemy and treat him kindly once or twice, but they cannot love unchangingly until death someone who repeatedly harms and insults them. Since self-centeredness, hatred, and vengefulness are in the human heart, no one can be acknowledged as righteous by his own deeds before God's perfect standard.

The words *"You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect"* are not a condition of salvation demanding that human beings reach the same level as God's character by effort. Rather, before this command, people come to realize that they are not merely somewhat lacking but complete sinners who cannot practice the love of God perfectly. They must abandon the thought of being saved by developing the good potential within themselves and look to Jesus Christ, who has saved them perfectly.

Jesus did not come only for those who loved Him. He came to this earth to save all who lived in sin, opposing God. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind, who hated their enemies, took revenge, and loved only their own side. He was without sin, yet He received the responsibility of sinners onto His own body.

After having the sins of everyone in the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist,

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Jesus bore those sins and was crucified. People rejected Him, insulted Him, and nailed Him to the Cross, but He received in sinners' place the judgment they deserved and died shedding His blood. Then He was buried, rose again on the third day, overcame sin and death, and completed salvation.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching that gives the remission of sins as a reward to those who have loved their enemies well. It is the gospel of believing the fact that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John and completely removed those sins through the Cross and the resurrection. Those who believe this gospel with their hearts receive the remission of sins regardless of their deeds and become righteous people without sin before God.

The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have received the remission of sins by believing that Jesus had all sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Therefore, loving one's enemies does not come from an inborn character or human patience; it becomes possible through the work of the Holy Spirit who dwells in the heart. Even when the flesh wants to hate, the Spirit makes us see the other person's weakness and makes us wait and pray for him to believe the right gospel and turn back.

The perfection of those who believe in the gospel and their deeds in the flesh must be understood separately. They have become perfectly righteous by faith because Jesus Christ completely removed their sins. It does not mean that their fleshly character has become flawless so that they never get angry or hate again. Even after being saved, insufficiency appears in their deeds, but that insufficiency does not make incomplete the remission of sins Jesus completed.

Therefore, believers must neither be discouraged, thinking

they have become sinners again when their deeds fall short, nor, on the contrary, think that they may live however they please because they are already righteous. They must confirm their perfect standing with the word of the gospel and, receiving the reproof of the Holy Spirit, admit their wrongs. If there is something to apologize for to the person they hated, they must apologize; if they have caused loss, they must set it right; and praying for the person they resented, they must practice love again by faith.

Praying for one's enemy does not necessarily mean having to return to the same relationship as before. One may keep a distance to protect oneself and others from continuing violence or deceit. Only, one must not delight in his failure and ruin but pray, hoping that he will realize his sin before God and be saved. If an opportunity to preach the gospel is given, one must not put personal feelings first but deliver the truth for the sake of his soul.

Loving one's enemies is not a word applied only to special foes far away. It also appears in how we treat a family member who has hurt our feelings at home, a brother in the church whose thoughts differ from ours, and a person who treats us unfairly at work. Instead of listening only to our own side or greeting only those close to us, we must approach first, seek peace, and consider the other person's situation. This is not an act that shows off the will of the flesh; it is the fruit of faith that displays the Father's lovingkindness in reliance on the Holy Spirit.

The perfection of God appeared in His giving the needed sunshine and rain to the evil and the good, and above all in the love with which He sent His only begotten Son to save the sinners who opposed Him. Those who have received that perfect love do not first weigh whether the other person

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deserves to be loved. Because they know that they themselves received mercy without any merit, they can be longsuffering toward others and do them good.

Matthew 5:43–48 is not a word telling us to become children of God by loving our enemies through human effort. These words first reveal that the human flesh cannot practice the perfect love of God, and they lead us to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus Christ completed. The righteous who have received the remission of sins through that gospel and have the Holy Spirit within them have become perfect by faith, and following the help of the Holy Spirit, they live pitying their enemies, praying for those who persecute them, and displaying to the world the character of God the Father, who grants grace to both the good and the evil. ✉

Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 5

[Question] 1. Explain the main content of Matthew chapter 5, the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew chapter 5 is the word Jesus taught when He went up on a mountain and showed His disciples and the crowds who followed Him the faith, heart, and life that the people of the kingdom of heaven must possess. After taking upon Himself the sins of the world through John the Baptist and overcoming the Devil's temptations in the wilderness, Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven in Galilee and called His disciples. Then, through the Sermon on the Mount, He taught with what faith the people of God who have received the remission of sins must live.

First, in verses 1–12 are recorded the words commonly called the Beatitudes. Jesus said that the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake are blessed. This blessing does not mean the wealth, honor, and fleshly prosperity of the world; it means the spiritual blessings received from God.

The poor in spirit are those who know that they cannot satisfy their souls with the things of the world and who earnestly seek the grace of God and the remission of sins. Those who mourn are those who grieve over their own sins and

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the perishing of other souls and who long for the salvation of God. The meek are those who submit their own thoughts to the word of God and accept His will by faith. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are those who earnestly seek not their own righteousness but the righteousness God has accomplished.

Furthermore, the merciful are those who know that they have received the remission of sins by God's mercy and so pity other souls as well, and the pure in heart are those who have had the sins of their hearts washed away by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Peacemakers are those who preach the true gospel to sinners who were enemies of God and lead them to be reconciled with God. Those who are persecuted for righteousness are not those who suffer hardship because of their own stubbornness or wrongdoing but those who suffer while serving the righteousness of God and the gospel. Thus the Beatitudes are not a method of obtaining salvation by accumulating good deeds; they show the spiritual heart and the life of faith possessed by those who have received the remission of sins by the grace of God.

In verses 13–16, Jesus called His disciples the salt and light of the world. As salt keeps food from decaying and brings out its flavor, those who have become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must guard the truth of the gospel in the world and preach the gospel so that souls do not perish in sin. And as light brightens the darkness, the righteous must deliver the truth of salvation to those darkened by sin. The good works of the saints do not stop at simply living ethically good lives; they include the life of preaching the gospel so that people receive the remission of sins and give glory to God.

But just as salt becomes useless when it loses its flavor, the

saved also cannot be used preciously by God if they live following the desires of the world and forsake their mission of serving the gospel. Therefore, the righteous must not stop at boasting of their own salvation but must preach the gospel in the place entrusted to them and live as the light and salt of the world.

In verses 17–20, Jesus said that He had come not to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them completely. The Law reveals the holiness of God and the sin of man, and it makes people realize that they cannot become righteous by their own deeds. Moreover, the Law of the Old Testament and the prophecies of the prophets were pointing to the Christ who was to come and the salvation He would accomplish.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took over all the sins of mankind onto His own body; bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood and so bore the judgment of sin; and by rising from death, He completed salvation. In this way, Jesus Himself fulfilled the price of sin that the Law demands and all the righteousness of God.

The scribes and Pharisees thought they were righteous by keeping the outward works of the Law, but in their hearts were sin, greed, and hypocrisy. Therefore, the righteousness better than theirs is not a righteousness people produce by their own efforts. It is the righteousness of God received by believing in Jesus Christ, who removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Only by believing in this righteousness can a person enter the kingdom of heaven.

In verses 21–48, Jesus did not restrict the Law merely to the matter of outward actions but applied it even to the depths of the human heart. Even if one has not actually killed anyone, the heart that hates, is angry with, and despises one’s brother

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becomes the root of murder. Therefore, we must be reconciled with our brothers before offering gifts to God, and we must not carry on a formal religious life while harboring resentment and hatred.

Likewise, even if one has not actually committed adultery, looking at a person with lust is already committing adultery in the heart. Jesus taught that sin is so fearsome that whatever causes one to sin must be cut off decisively. Through the words about marriage and divorce, He made clear that the order of marriage God established must not be treated lightly according to human greed and convenience.

In the words about oaths, He taught us to live honest lives, saying that what is right is right and that what is not is not, without using the name of God or other things to cover falsehood. In the words about retaliation, He told us not to follow the nature of the flesh that repays evil with evil, but to have the faith that endures loss, is patient, and gives. By telling us not to stop at hating our enemies but to love them and pray for those who persecute us, He taught that the love of the people of the kingdom of heaven must be different from worldly love, which is directed only toward those who treat one well.

That Jesus applied the demands of the Law even to the human heart does not mean He said that human beings can become perfect by their own deeds and resolutions. Rather, He revealed clearly that no one can fully keep God’s holy standard and that everyone is a sinner who commits countless sins in the heart. Before these words, people must cast away their own righteousness and believe in the righteousness of God accomplished by Jesus Christ.

Finally, Jesus told us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. A human being in the flesh cannot become perfect

like God by his own efforts. But when we believe the fact that Jesus Christ took on all the sins of sinners and paid the wages of those sins in full, the heart of the believer is washed of all sins and made righteous. And under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can live lives that practice the righteousness of God with love, mercy, peace, and truthfulness.

Therefore, Matthew chapter 5 is not a word that teaches how a person obtains salvation by good deeds. This chapter first exposes the sins in the human heart through the Law and makes us realize that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven by his own righteousness. And it teaches that those who have obtained the righteousness of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished by Jesus Christ must live the life of the people of the kingdom of heaven—preaching the gospel as the salt and light of the world, being reconciled with their brothers, and loving even their enemies with honest and merciful hearts.

[Question] 2. In Matthew 5:1, where was the place where Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up and sat down to preach?

The place where Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up, sat down, and taught the word was a mountain. The Scriptures do not reveal the specific name of that mountain but simply record that *"He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated."* When Jesus sat down on the mountain, His disciples came near to Him, and opening His mouth, Jesus taught the disciples and the gathered crowds about the faith and life the people of the kingdom of heaven must possess. The word He delivered at this time is the Sermon on the Mount.

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[Question] 3. Explain the meaning of the words *"opened His mouth"* recorded in Matthew 5:2.

The expression *"opened His mouth"* does not merely indicate that Jesus began to speak. It is an expression that emphasizes that Jesus began to teach the disciples and the gathered crowds, publicly, clearly, and solemnly, the important truth they had to hear.

Jesus revealed to people who did not know the will of God well the true blessings the people of the kingdom of heaven enjoy and the heart and life they must possess. His words were not teachings that came from human wisdom or opinion; they were the authoritative word of God proclaimed personally by Jesus, the Son of God.

Therefore, the record that He *"opened His mouth and taught them, saying"* means that Jesus revealed the truth of the kingdom of heaven to people without hiding it and began in earnest the important teaching of the Sermon on the Mount.

[Question] 4. Matthew 5:3–10—explain from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit the eight blessings Jesus spoke of in the Sermon on the Mount.

The eight blessings Jesus spoke of do not center on fleshly blessings such as becoming rich and gaining high positions in the world. They show the blessing of a sinner realizing his spiritual state, receiving the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and then living a righteous life that obeys the word of God and saves souls.

These eight are not eight conditions a person must meet by

his own efforts to obtain salvation. The first part shows the state of heart in which a sinner comes to seek salvation, and the words that follow show the faith and the fruits of life that appear in the righteous who have received the remission of sins.

First, He said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

The poor in spirit are not simply people without wealth; they are those who know that before God they have no righteousness or power of salvation of their own. They admit that they cannot solve their sins with their good deeds and religious zeal and that they are people who can only go to hell because of their sins. They also know that the wealth, honor, and pleasures of the world cannot fill the thirst of the soul, and they seek the eternal things God gives and the remission of sins.

Those whose hearts are full of their own righteousness and worldly desires can hardly accept the salvation of God. But those who admit their spiritual poverty ask God for help, accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and obtain the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, poverty of spirit is not despair itself but the blessed heart that leads one to accept the salvation of God.

Second, He said, *"Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted."*

Those who mourn are not simply people who grieve because things in the world have not gone their way. They are those who grieve as they realize that sin keeps coming out of their hearts, that they cannot live according to the will of God, and that they can only be judged for those sins. They do not take their sins and weaknesses lightly; they pity their own souls and ask God for salvation.

The true comfort God gives to those who mourn is not a temporary consolation of feelings but the remission of sins that

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washes away all sins. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body, bore those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, overcoming the power of death. When those who mourned over their sins believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, they are cleansed of all the sins of their hearts, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and obtain true comfort.

Third, He said, *"Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth."*

The meekness the Scriptures speak of does not mean merely having a soft way of speaking and a quiet personality. True meekness is breaking one's own thoughts and stubbornness when God speaks, and receiving the written word into one's heart, believing and obeying it. The meek person is the one who does not follow what many people in the world think but believes just as God has spoken, because it is God who has spoken.

Even those who have received the remission of sins find it hard to follow the Lord's will if they put their own thoughts first. But the meek accept the guidance of the word within the church and carry out by faith the work of the gospel entrusted to them. God looks after the lives of such people, supplies what they need in both spirit and body, and grants them ground on which to serve the gospel on this earth and, in the future, the inheritance of the kingdom of God.

Fourth, He said, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."*

Here, *"righteousness"* refers first to the righteousness of God, which God accomplished to save sinners. Those who know that they cannot become righteous by their own deeds earnestly seek the perfect remission of sins God has accomplished. By believing in the gospel of the water and the

Spirit, they obtain the righteousness of God and enjoy spiritual fullness.

Furthermore, after receiving the remission of sins, they earnestly want to do the righteous work of saving other souls from sin. The most righteous work before God is to preach the true gospel to those held captive by sin and Satan so that they may receive the remission of sins and life. To those who hunger and thirst for righteous work, God gives opportunities and places to preach and serve the gospel so that they may do the work of righteousness to their hearts' content. This is the fullness they enjoy.

Fifth, He said, *"Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy."*

The merciful are those who pity the souls that are heading for destruction because they have not yet received the remission of sins. Because they know that they themselves were saved from sin by the mercy of God, they do not despise or condemn others but want them also to hear the gospel and be saved.

True mercy does not stop at the feeling of pity. It goes as far as praying for that soul, preaching the gospel, and actually helping him to be able to hear the word. God also has mercy on the shortcomings and hardships of those who pity and serve other souls like this, and He grants them the grace and help they need.

Sixth, He said, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God."*

Human beings cannot make their hearts completely clean by self-cultivation or good deeds. Purity of heart comes when all sins are washed away by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished by Jesus. The flesh may still be lacking, but in the heart of the person who believes the word

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that God has removed all sins there is no sin, and the Holy Spirit dwells there.

Being pure in heart also includes the attitude of listening to and believing the word purely, without hiding other fleshly purposes before God. Those who seek God only to gain the wealth and power of the world cannot see the truth, but those who admit what they really are and seek salvation believe the gospel and meet God. Those who have received the remission of sins see God in the word and in the Holy Spirit, and they can pray to God and have fellowship with Him without hindrance.

Seventh, He said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God."*

Making peace does not mean merely mediating quarrels between people or avoiding conflict unconditionally. Because of sin, human beings have become enemies of God, so the problem of sin must first be solved and they must be reconciled with God. What brings true peace between man and God is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which washes away all sins.

Therefore, a peacemaker is a person who preaches this gospel and helps sinners be reconciled with God. He is an envoy of peace who delivers God's will of salvation, and he does what pleases God the Father. Such a life is not a human merit for becoming a child of God but the fruit of faith that appears in those who have become children of God by believing in the gospel.

Eighth, He said, *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Being persecuted for righteousness does not mean suffering hardship because of one's own faults or rudeness. It means being hated, mocked, slandered, and persecuted by people while believing in and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the righteousness of God, and doing the

work of saving other souls. The false beliefs of the world and the forces of Satan hate the spread of the true gospel, so hardship can follow those who serve the gospel.

But those who are persecuted because of the gospel are people who have already obtained the kingdom of heaven, and their labor and suffering are not in vain before God. God knows all the suffering endured for righteousness and repays it with a heavenly reward. Therefore, the saints must not lose heart or give up the gospel when they meet persecution; believing that they are participating in the righteous work of God, they must rejoice and serve the gospel to the end.

In the end, the eight blessings form one flow centered on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A sinner who is poor in spirit mourns over his sins and seeks salvation, and his heart becomes pure by believing in the gospel. After that, he meekly obeys the word of God, hungers and thirsts for the righteous work of the gospel, and comes to pity the souls heading for destruction. He also preaches the gospel to make peace between people and God, and even when he is persecuted for that righteous work, he lives by faith to the end.

Therefore, the Beatitudes are not a list of worldly successes; they are the blessings of enjoying the remission of sins and the kingdom of heaven, God's comfort and inheritance, spiritual fullness and mercy, fellowship with God, the life of God's children, and the reward of heaven. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive and enjoy these blessings by faith, and they must live preaching the gospel so that other souls may obtain the same blessings.

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[Question] 5. In Matthew 5:3, who are *"the poor in spirit"* whom Jesus called blessed?

"The poor in spirit" does not mean simply those who have no property or live in want. Being poor here refers not to the condition of the body or of material things but to the state of the heart. The person who realizes that gaining the wealth, honor, and power of the world cannot bring true satisfaction to his soul, and who earnestly seeks the heavenly blessings God gives and everlasting life, is the one who is poor in spirit.

The people of Israel in those days, while professing to believe in God, regarded fleshly well-being and prosperity as the center of blessing. But Jesus corrected this notion of fleshly blessing in the first words of the Sermon on the Mount. He said that the truly blessed person is not the one whose heart has grown rich by possessing many things in the world, but the one who knows that the things of the world cannot fill the empty place of the soul and who comes to God.

For those who have not yet received the remission of sins, poverty of spirit appears in admitting their sins and spiritual inability. It is realizing that their good deeds, the works of the Law, and religious zeal cannot remove their sins, and seeking the grace of salvation God has accomplished. Such people do not insist on their own righteousness but want to hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have the sins of their hearts washed away.

Those who have received the remission of sins must also keep living with hearts that are poor in spirit. Even if they have wealth or position, they do not regard these as their eternal possessions but think of them as things God has entrusted to them, and they remember that they are travelers who will leave this earth and go to the kingdom of God. The person who is

poor in spirit longs for the kingdom of heaven rather than being captivated by possessing more in the world, follows the will of God, and gives his life to preaching the gospel.

Therefore, being poor in spirit does not mean that one must unconditionally abandon one's property and live in want, nor is it an attitude of regarding oneself as worthless and losing heart. It means the heart of faith that does not fill itself with the things of the world, acknowledges that everything one has belongs to God, and seeks the grace, righteousness, and kingdom of God as the most precious things.

Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to such people because those who are not satisfied with the things of the world but seek the salvation of God accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit and become the people of heaven, and even after receiving the remission of sins they live hoping for the heavenly kingdom. Therefore, the poor in spirit refers to those who do not rely on themselves or the world but rely on God and long for the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness.

[Question] 6. Matthew 5:3—what is in the heart of those who cannot keep the word of the Law of God, and how could anyone who has sin and thus cannot enter the kingdom of heaven not have a poor spirit?

In the heart of the person who cannot fully keep the Law of God there is sin. The Law is not a means of proving how good a person is; it is like a mirror that makes one realize what sin is before God. When people honestly examine themselves before the Law, they come to know that in their hearts are evil thoughts, greed, hatred, lewdness, pride, and falsehood, and that they cannot keep all the words of God in their actions either.

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A person with sin in his heart will receive the judgment of God and cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. If he truly acknowledges this fact, he realizes that he has no righteousness to boast of and that he cannot be saved by his good deeds and religious efforts either. Therefore, the spirit of the person who knows that he is a sinner before God and can only go to hell cannot but become poor. He comes to have the heart that says, "I have no righteousness to present before God, and unless the Lord saves me, I can only perish."

Nevertheless, many people do not admit their sins but compare themselves with others. They make it their righteousness that they have lived better than others, attended church for a long time, and done much praying, serving, and giving. They also seek God to gain the world's wealth, health, and success rather than the remission of sins. The hearts of such people are not poor in spirit, because they are rich with their own righteousness and fleshly desires.

Being poor in spirit does not mean merely belittling oneself or living in despair. It is the heart that admits it has no righteousness or ability at all to achieve salvation and earnestly seeks only the grace of salvation that God gives. Such a person does not insist on his own thoughts and is ready to accept the word of the remission of sins God has prepared.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body, and bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood and rose again, saving sinners completely. The poor in spirit do not make their good deeds or prayers of repentance the basis of salvation; they believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit with their hearts and are cleansed of all their sins. Then they are changed from people who could not enter the kingdom of heaven because of sin into the people of heaven

who have obtained the righteousness of God.

Therefore, anyone who knows his own situation—that he has sin and so cannot enter the kingdom of heaven—cannot but have a poor spirit before God. The problem is not knowing the very fact that one has sin, or the pride that tries to cover it with one's own righteousness. To those who honestly admit their sins and inability and seek the salvation of God, Jesus promised, *"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

[Question] 7. Matthew 5:3—what is the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which brings the remission of sins to the heart and grants the qualification to enter the kingdom of heaven?

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word that Jesus Christ came to this earth, had all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood while bearing those sins, and rose again from death, thereby saving sinners completely. It is not a gospel that believes in the blood of the Cross taken by itself; it is the complete gospel of salvation in which the passing of sins, the judgment of those sins, and the resurrection are connected as one.

Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in the flesh as the holy One without sin. When He turned thirty, Jesus went to John the Baptist, who had been raised up as the representative of mankind, and was baptized by him. 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)*. Here, *"all righteousness"* means the righteousness of God that takes on all the sins of sinners in a righteous way and saves them from sin.

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In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of an unblemished sacrificial offering and passed his sins onto it. Likewise, in the New Testament, John the Baptist, representing all mankind, baptized Jesus, and so the sins of everyone in the world were passed on to the body of Jesus, the Lamb of God. The baptism He received from John the Baptist was not a religious ceremony Jesus performed to show humility; it was the event of salvation in which He officially took on the sins of mankind.

After this event, John the Baptist saw Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. In *"the sin of the world"* that Jesus bore are included all the sins from Adam onward and all the sins we commit from birth to death—past, present, and future. Because the sins were passed on to Jesus, He could go toward the Cross as the Lamb of God bearing the sin of the world.

Jesus' death on the Cross, shedding His blood, was the event in which He received the punishment of the sins He had already taken on. Since the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had shouldered the sin of the world, received the curse and judgment in the place of sinners and gave up His life. The blood of the Cross shows that after the sins were passed on to Jesus, God's judgment on those sins was carried out completely. Therefore, the water, which signifies the passing of sins, and the blood of the Cross, which bore the punishment of sins, can never be separated.

Jesus rose again from death on the third day after being buried. The resurrection reveals that Jesus is the Son of God, and it confirms that the judgment on the sins of mankind has completely ended and that believers have been made righteous. The Scriptures say that Jesus *"was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).*

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the 'water' refers to Jesus' taking on the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John. The 'Spirit' testifies that this work of salvation is not a doctrine made by man but the truth accomplished by God, and that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior. The Holy Spirit dwells in those who believe this gospel with their hearts and receive the remission of sins, and He testifies that they have become children of God.

To believe this gospel is not merely to acknowledge a historical event as knowledge. It is to accept with the heart the fact that all the sins of my lifetime were passed on to Jesus, that the judgment of those sins ended on the Cross, and that I have been made righteous through Jesus' resurrection. Those who have this faith are no longer sinners with sin remaining in their hearts; they become the righteous whom God has acknowledged as righteous.

The remission of sins is not something a person completes little by little by washing away his sins every day. Because Jesus took on all the sins of mankind at once and received their judgment completely, those who believe this gospel are washed of all their sins once and for all. As a result, they receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, become children of God, call God their Father, and obtain the qualification to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Therefore, when Jesus said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*, He meant that we must be born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The poor in spirit cast away their own righteousness and religious merits and accept this gospel as the gift of God. Receiving the remission of all the sins of the heart and obtaining the righteousness of God through this very faith is the true qualification to enter the kingdom of heaven.

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[Question] 8. In Matthew 5:3, what is the blessing given to the poor in spirit?

The blessing given to the poor in spirit is that the kingdom of heaven becomes theirs. Those who know that the wealth and honor of the world cannot bring true satisfaction to the soul and who seek the grace and salvation of God hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins, and become children of God and the people of heaven.

That the kingdom of heaven becomes theirs does not mean only entering heaven after death. Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the Holy Spirit into their hearts, live under the rule of God, and live on this earth, too, with faith that hopes for heaven. And in the end, they inherit the everlasting kingdom God has prepared and live there forever.

Therefore, the blessing promised to the poor in spirit is not temporary material abundance; it is the greatest and most spiritual blessing—receiving the remission of sins, the authority to become children of God, and the everlasting kingdom of heaven.

[Question] 9. In Matthew 5:4, what kind of person is the one who grieves before God over his sins and the state caused by his sins?

The person who sincerely grieves before God over his sins and the wretched spiritual state they have caused is the one who mourns. Mourning here does not mainly mean grieving over lost property or things in the world not going one’s way. It means realizing through the word of God that there is sin in

one's heart and aching over the fact that one can only receive judgment and destruction because of that sin.

The one who mourns does not rate himself highly as righteous and good. He honestly admits his sins and shortcomings and realizes the fact that good deeds, the works of the Law, and repeated prayers of repentance cannot completely remove the sins of the heart. So he lays down his own righteousness and stubbornness and earnestly seeks the grace of the remission of sins and the salvation God has provided.

Such mourning does not end in despair. The person who has realized his sins hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believes it, has all his sins remitted, and obtains true comfort from God. The greatest comfort given to the one who mourns is that a person who could only be judged for sin becomes righteous by believing in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

Moreover, the person who has received the remission of sins looks at the shortcomings of his flesh and examines himself before God, and he grieves over the souls that have not yet received the remission of sins and are heading for destruction. Therefore, the one who mourns refers to the person who admits his sins and spiritual inability, seeks the salvation of God, and aches even for the salvation of other souls.

[Question] 10. Matthew 5:4—explain how God pities those who know it is right to live by the word of the Law and yet ache in their hearts because they cannot live that way, and how He saves them through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and takes them to the Lord's kingdom.

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Jesus said, *"Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted."* The one who mourns here does not mean a person who grieves merely because life is hard or things in the world have not gone his way. It means the person who knows that the Law of God is good and right and yet aches at the sight of himself continually sinning, unable to live by that word.

The Law of God teaches people what sin is and shows the standard of righteousness God requires. But human beings, born with the nature of sin, have no ability to keep the Law fully. Even when they resolve to live good lives, evil thoughts, greed, hatred, and pride arise in their hearts, and they break the word of God in speech and action as well. Those who honestly realize this fact know that they cannot escape the judgment of sin, and they come to mourn.

The person who truly mourns does not comfort himself by comparing himself with others. Nor does he put forward his years of church attendance or his prayers, service, and good deeds. Looking at the sins that come out of his heart, he laments, "Why can I not live according to the will of God? Who can save me from this sin?" and seeks the help of God. This is the heart that fears the perishing of its own soul and pities its own soul.

God does not turn away from those who acknowledge their sins and inability and seek salvation like this. Yet the fact that a person has mourned and shed many tears does not itself wash away sin. Mourning is the heart that casts away its own righteousness and accepts the salvation God has prepared, and what actually washes away sin is the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished by Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to this earth because He pitied sinners. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body, died on the

Cross shedding His blood while bearing those sins, and rose again from death, ending all sin and judgment. Those who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit are washed not only of the sins committed by failing to keep the Law but of all the sins they commit from birth to death.

The *"comfort"* God gives to those who mourn is not a temporary consolation that merely soothes the heart. It is the true comfort of making them believe the word of the remission of sins—"Because My Son has taken on all your sins and been judged for them, you now have no sin"—and of giving them the Holy Spirit in their hearts and making them children of God. The greatest comfort is that a person who could only go to hell because of sin becomes righteous, calls God Father, and hopes for the kingdom of heaven.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, a person's flesh is weak and can act insufficiently. But that does not mean he becomes a sinner again each time and must receive salvation anew. He must believe the word of the gospel that all his sins had already been passed on to Jesus and judged in Him, admit his wrongs, and turn back by faith, following the word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He must also preach this gospel of salvation to others who mourn over sin as he did.

Therefore, the person who aches at the sight of himself unable to live by the Law is blessed. He gives up his own righteousness and seeks the mercy of God, and God lets him hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe it, saving him from all sins. And leading him by the Holy Spirit, God at last takes him to the everlasting kingdom of the Lord. This is the comfort of the remission of sins and the blessing of heaven that God gives to those who mourn.

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[Question] 11. What does Matthew 5:4 promise will be given to those who mourn?

The promise given to those who mourn is that they will receive comfort from God. To the person who realizes his sins and his spiritual condition of facing judgment because of them and grieves, God gives the grace of the remission of sins and the joy of salvation.

This comfort is not a brief soothing of sad feelings. It is the true and everlasting comfort of having all the sins of the heart washed away by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and of becoming a child of God, freed from condemnation and the fear of destruction. Moreover, to the righteous who mourn for the salvation of other souls, the joy of seeing those souls receive the remission of sins through the preaching of the gospel is also given as comfort.

Therefore, the greatest comfort received by those who mourn is the assurance that all their sins have been solved in Jesus Christ, and the everlasting life and peace they will enjoy in the kingdom of God.

[Question] 12. In Matthew 5:5, what kind of person is the meek person the Scriptures speak of?

The meek person the Scriptures speak of does not mean simply a person with a quiet personality or a soft way of speaking. The meek person is the one who lays down his own thoughts and stubbornness before God and, if it is the word of God, humbles his heart and accepts it by faith.

People easily put their own experience and judgment ahead of the word of God. But the meek person does not defy the

word or try to change it to suit his circumstances even when it differs from his own thoughts. He acknowledges that the word of God is right, and when his sins and shortcomings are exposed, he does not make excuses but accepts the teaching of the word.

When a person who has not yet received the remission of sins has a meek heart, he casts away his own righteousness and religious stubbornness and accepts by faith the remission of sins God has accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who have received the remission of sins also do not follow only the thoughts of their own flesh but receive the word of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit and serve the gospel in union with the church.

Meekness does not mean weakness or servility. The meek person is patient in the face of personal insult and loss and shows mercy to others, but he does not compromise on the righteousness of God and the truth of salvation. Without crushing others with his own anger and strength, he still clearly keeps the truth of the gospel.

Therefore, the meek person is the one who casts away the thoughts and stubbornness that go against the word of God, believes and obeys the word as it is, and treats others with patience and mercy. Such meekness is not achieved by inborn character alone; it is the heart of faith that appears when one believes in the righteousness of God and receives the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

[Question] 13. Matthew 5:5—explain that when God says, “You are a seed of iniquity and a seed of evildoing; all your life you do only evil, refuse to submit to the word of My Law, and refuse to

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acknowledge the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit," the one who receives that word into his heart as it is, is the meek person.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth."* The meek person here does not mean simply someone with a soft personality who rarely gets angry. True meekness in the Scriptures is the attitude of not putting forward one's own thoughts and pride, however God may speak about oneself, but bowing the knees of the heart before that word and acknowledging it as it is.

God says that human beings, born as descendants of Adam, are a seed of evildoing born with sin in their hearts, unable by themselves to keep the Law of God fully. Out of the human heart come evil thoughts, greed, hatred, lewdness, falsehood, and pride, and when the opportunity is given, people carry them out in words and actions. Even those who seem to have lived relatively good lives are no different in that they have the fundamental nature of sin and no ability to keep the Law of God fully.

The hard-hearted defend themselves when they hear this word. They insist, "I am not such an evil person. I have lived better than others and have tried in my own way to keep the word of God." They also rationalize that they sinned because of other people and circumstances. Those who put their own righteousness and thoughts ahead of God's verdict like this are not meek before God, however quiet and kind they may look on the outside.

On the other hand, when the meek person hears the word of God, he acknowledges, "The word with which God has judged me is right. I was born with sin, I cannot keep the Law of God fully, and left to myself, I am a person who will live sinning

and be judged." He accepts the fact that God knows his hidden heart and nature more accurately than he does. This is the meekness that bows the knees of the heart before the word.

The meek person also acknowledges that he is a being who tries to reject the truth easily, clings to the doctrines and thoughts he has learned, and is inclined to follow false beliefs just because many people hold them. When God says that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true word of salvation, he does not reject it because it differs from his own thoughts or the tradition of his denomination. If the written word says so, he lays down his own thoughts and receives it as the truth.

True meekness is not only acknowledging what God says about man's sinfulness but also believing the salvation God has accomplished just as it is. Accepting only the word that one is a seed of evildoing and falling into despair is not whole faith, and claiming only the love of God while refusing to admit one's own sinfulness is not right faith either. One must accept both God's verdict on man and the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of this seed of evildoing, mankind, passed on to His own body. And bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood and rose again, saving us from sin and judgment. The meek person confesses, "The word that I am one who would perish because of sin is right, and the word that Jesus took on all my sins and removed them is also right," and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through this faith he receives the remission of sins and becomes one of God's people.

Meek faith remains necessary even after receiving the remission of sins. When one's fleshly thoughts, desires, and shortcomings are exposed, one must not hide them or make

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excuses but accept the word's reproof. And before God's will that we preach the gospel and serve the church, one must not put forward one's own circumstances and stubbornness but obey by faith the work entrusted to him. Insisting only on one's own opinions against the word after being saved is not a meek life.

The word that the meek shall inherit the earth means that God takes responsibility for the life of the person who believes and obeys His word and grants him ground and provision for serving the gospel. And in the end, he comes to enjoy the everlasting inheritance of the kingdom of God. Therefore, true meekness is not an inborn temperament; it is the heart that acknowledges and believes both God's verdict on sin and the gospel of the water and the Spirit just as they are written, and obeys.

[Question] 14. Matthew 5:5—when the born-again live their lives of faith within the Church of God, is the one who accepts at face value and lives by the words that tell him to live with the purpose of preaching the gospel, not to put forward his own righteousness, and to boast of the righteousness of God, the meek person?

Yes. The person who, having been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, does not change the word of God according to his own thoughts but accepts it as it is, and who lives within the church with the preaching of the gospel as the purpose of his life, is the meek person. Meekness appears not so much in inborn personality as in the attitude of the heart toward the word of God.

God tells the saved saints not to live only for the profit and honor of their own flesh but to live with the purpose of preaching the gospel to the souls that have not yet received the remission of sins. The meek person does not push this word away as burdensome or scale it down to fit his circumstances. Believing that God has saved him from sin and called him as a worker of the gospel, he unites with the church and serves the gospel in the place entrusted to him.

Making gospel preaching one's purpose does not mean that everyone must hold the same office or work in the same way. Some preach the gospel directly, some teach the word, and others can support the preaching of the gospel with material things, skills, time, and prayer. Each person's office and circumstances differ, but what matters is serving in union with one another for the one purpose of saving souls.

The meek person does not put forward his own righteousness while doing the Lord's work. He does not boast of how much he has labored, how long he has been in the church, or what he has done better than others. Nor does he demand recognition and treatment on the basis of what he has done or belittle others. Because he knows that even after receiving the remission of sins he is still insufficient and weak in the flesh, he acknowledges that he can do nothing apart from the grace of the Lord.

Instead, he boasts of the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is the righteousness by which Jesus had all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross shedding His blood while bearing those sins, and rose again, saving us completely. A saint has become righteous not because his deeds were excellent but because he believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. That he can serve the

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gospel is also due not to his own ability but to the grace and power God has granted.

Therefore, the meek person's boast is not "I have accomplished this work" but the gratitude that says, "The Lord has saved someone like me and used me in the work of the gospel." He exalts the word of God above his own experience and thoughts, and he wants the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the righteousness of Jesus Christ to be revealed rather than himself.

Accepting the word at face value does not mean following people's words or every instruction without any discernment. The standard must always be the written word of God and the true gospel. Wrong teachings must be discerned by the word, but when the will of God has been clearly confirmed, one must obey by faith without putting forward one's pride, convenience, and desires. This is meekness before the word.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, the human flesh tries to build up its own righteousness and chase comfort. Therefore, the saints must keep hearing the word, laying down their own thoughts, and following the purpose of the gospel in union with the Church of God. When they do wrong, they must admit it without excuses, believe again in the righteousness of God, and carry out the work entrusted to them.

Jesus promised that such meek people will inherit the earth. To those who obey the word for the purpose of the gospel, God grants places to serve and the wisdom, health, and material things they need, and He makes their labor bear the fruit of life. He also lets them enjoy the everlasting inheritance of the kingdom of God in the world to come.

Therefore, if a born-again person receives into his heart the words "Live for the preaching of the gospel; do not build up your own righteousness; boast of the righteousness of God"

and obeys them in his actual life, he is the meek person the Scriptures speak of. Meek faith is the life of faith that does not exalt oneself but exalts the righteousness of God and the gospel, and gives itself to the work of saving souls in union with the church.

[Question] 15. In Matthew 5:5, what is the blessing that the meek will receive?

The blessing given to the meek is inheriting the earth. This does not mean seizing and possessing land by one's own power and greed; it means that God gives the promised inheritance to those who lay down their own thoughts and stubbornness and believe and obey His word.

The meek person does not fight with others and exalt himself to gain the power or wealth of the world. Because he entrusts his life to God and lives according to the word, God prepares the ground of life he needs, leads him so that he can serve the gospel, and protects him. Therefore, the blessing of inheriting the earth does not necessarily mean coming to own much land or property in the world. It includes the blessing of enjoying God's care and provision in the place He has entrusted.

Ultimately, this promise refers to those who have become children of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit inheriting the everlasting kingdom God has prepared. The power and possessions of this world pass away, but the new heaven and new earth God gives are everlasting. Therefore, the blessing the meek receive is to enjoy God's guidance and care on this earth and finally to inherit the everlasting kingdom of God.

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[Question] 16. What does the "righteousness" spoken of in Matthew 5:6 refer to?

The *"righteousness"* spoken of in verse 6 refers not to human righteousness that people establish with their own efforts and good deeds but to the righteousness of God, which God accomplished through Jesus Christ to save sinners.

The righteousness of God means the saving work in which the sinless Jesus had the sins of everyone in the world passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and was crucified, dying with His blood shed, and so bore the judgment of sin completely, and then rose from death, overcoming the power of sin and death. Through this work God fulfilled both His just judgment on sin and His saving love for sinners.

Therefore, people do not produce the righteousness of God by keeping the Law well or doing many good deeds. When they believe with their hearts the fact that Jesus Christ removed all sins with the water and the Spirit, they receive the righteousness of God and become righteous people without sin. This righteousness is not achieved by man; it is the righteousness received by believing in what God has accomplished.

For those who have received the remission of sins, *"righteousness"* also includes the righteous work of serving and preaching the gospel of salvation God has accomplished. Not seeking only one's own success and fleshly satisfaction in the world, but preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls that have not yet received the remission of sins so that they too may believe in the righteousness of God and be saved—this is the most righteous work before God.

Therefore, the *"righteousness"* of verse 6 is fundamentally

the perfect righteousness of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ, and at the same time it refers to the righteous life in which those saved by believing in that righteousness preach the gospel and serve the will of God.

[Question] 17. In Matthew 5:6, whom do the Scriptures mean by those who hunger and thirst for righteousness?

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are those who long earnestly for the righteousness God has accomplished, as a starving person looks for food and a thirsty person desperately seeks water. They are not people who want to be recognized as just in the world or to establish their own moral righteousness, but people who know that they have no true righteousness of their own and seek the righteousness of God.

For those who have not yet received the remission of sins, hungering and thirsting for righteousness begins with realizing that their good deeds and the works of the Law cannot solve their sins. They lay down their own righteousness and earnestly want to hear and believe the righteousness of God, which Jesus Christ accomplished with the water and the Spirit, and to have all the sins of their hearts remitted.

For those who have received the remission of sins, hungering and thirsting for righteousness means the heart that wants to do the righteous work of God. They cannot find true satisfaction in worldly success, wealth, and fleshly pleasures alone, and they wish to be used in preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls not yet saved so that those souls may receive the remission of sins.

Such people feel an emptiness of heart when they live only

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for themselves without serving the gospel. On the other hand, when they give their hearts, bodies, time, and possessions to the preaching of the gospel and see people receive the remission of sins and become children of God through their labor, they enjoy true joy and satisfaction. They want to do many righteous works and desire to be used continually in the will of God.

Therefore, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are those who earnestly seek to be saved by believing in the righteousness of God and who, after being saved, make preaching the gospel of that righteousness and serving the will of God the joy and purpose of their lives. This thirst is not a desire of the flesh but the desire of faith that longs to accomplish what pleases God.

[Question] 18. Matthew 5:6—explain how God blesses those who, after believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, feel hunger and thirst for preaching the gospel and want to live their whole lives only for the Lord, so that they do blessed work and live well all their lives.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."* Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness here are those who, having first received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, want to live the rest of their lives for the righteous work of God.

The righteousness of God is the righteousness by which Jesus had all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on

the Cross shedding His blood while bearing those sins, and rose again, saving sinners completely. Those who believe this gospel come to know the fact that they became righteous not by their good deeds but by believing in the salvation God accomplished.

Those who have tasted the righteousness of God cannot keep this precious gospel to themselves. Seeing the souls that are heading for destruction without the remission of sins, they earnestly want them also to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and be saved. As a hungry person looks for food and a thirsty person looks for water, they feel a thirst in their hearts to do the righteous work of saving souls.

The most righteous work before God is to preach the true gospel to those held captive by sin and Satan so that they may obtain the remission of sins and everlasting life. Helping the poor and the sick and correcting the injustices of society are precious, but nothing is more fundamental and valuable than preaching the gospel of salvation to a soul that would otherwise perish forever. Therefore, preaching the gospel directly, praying for its spread, and supporting it with material things, skills, time, and labor are all blessed works that serve the righteousness of God.

God does not merely commend such thirsty people for having good hearts; He actually opens ways for them to do righteous work. He leads them to meet the Church of God, joins fellow workers to them, and entrusts each one with an office and a place for serving the gospel. To some He gives opportunities to preach the word; some He makes serve with literature, translation, and technical skills; and to others He entrusts the work of preparing and supporting the material needs of gospel preaching.

The words *"For they shall be filled"* mean that God gives

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those who earnestly desire righteous work abundant opportunities to do it and so satisfies them. Seeing a soul receive the remission of sins and become a child of God through the preaching of the gospel is the greatest joy and fullness a saint can enjoy. The fact that one's labor is used in saving souls gives a satisfaction that the world's wealth and honor alone can never give.

God does not look after only the spiritual work of those who have set their purpose on preaching the gospel; He also supplies what their lives need so that they can keep serving the Lord on this earth. He grants health, wisdom, the ability to work, a place to live, and material things; He protects them in hardship and opens the way by faith. When the saints first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, God adds to them what their lives need.

This does not mean, however, that whoever serves God is sure to become worldly rich and go through no hardship. Labor, sacrifice, and persecution can accompany the way of serving the gospel. Living well here does not mean fulfilling all one's desires and living comfortably; it means living the blessed life of receiving what one needs under God's care, doing the valuable work of the gospel, and storing up spiritual fruit and heavenly rewards.

Nor does living one's whole life for the Lord mean abandoning all the responsibilities of family, occupation, and daily life. The saints must live faithfully, placing their families, occupations, talents, and possessions under the purpose of the gospel. Even the life of eating, drinking, working, and raising children becomes a life for the Lord when it is used to support the preaching of the gospel and to give glory to God.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness do not work to accumulate merits for salvation. Because they have already

freely received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they serve the Lord out of gratitude. They do not boast of their own righteousness but boast of the grace of God, who saved them and uses them in righteous work.

Therefore, those who, after believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, earnestly long to preach the gospel and want to live their whole lives for the Lord are truly blessed. God grants them His church, the work of the gospel, and everything they need, and He makes them bear abundant fruit that saves souls. On this earth He lets them live rewarding lives under His protection and provision, and in the kingdom of God they will enjoy the everlasting reward for all their labor.

[Question] 19. According to Matthew 5:7, what is the blessing given to the merciful?

The blessing given to the merciful is that they themselves receive mercy from God. Mercy means the compassionate heart that pities the weaknesses and pain of others and tries to help them without condemning or turning away from them.

Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit know that they, too, could only have been judged because of sin but were saved by the mercy of God. Therefore, they must not despise those who have not yet received the remission of sins but must preach the gospel and help them so that they may be saved from sin and judgment. And when they deal with the shortcomings of their brothers and sisters, they must not condemn rashly but be patient and lead them to return to right faith.

God also has mercy on those who pity other souls and serve for their salvation like this. God knows their shortcomings and

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weaknesses, helps them, and grants the grace and strength they need so that they can keep carrying out the work of the gospel.

Therefore, the blessing the merciful receive is God's compassion and help. This does not mean buying salvation with acts of mercy; it means that when a person who has first received the remission of sins by God's mercy shows that mercy to others as well, God looks after his life and adds grace to him.

[Question] 20. Matthew 5:7—explain that the one who has received the remission of sins in his heart has a heart that pities many souls, but the one who has never received the mercy of God can neither have nor show a merciful heart toward other souls.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy."* True mercy toward other souls does not come from an inborn good nature or momentary sympathy; it begins with knowing the fact that one has first received great mercy from God.

Before receiving the remission of sins, a person does not fully know how evil and helpless a sinner he is before God, or that he is a being who can only go to judgment and hell. Because he thinks of himself as relatively good and decent, he easily judges and condemns the sins of others. He may pity someone in hardship and give material help, but since he does not know that that soul is heading for everlasting destruction because of sin, he cannot show fundamental spiritual mercy.

This does not mean that a person who has never received God's mercy has no natural kindness or sympathy at all. Even unbelievers can help the poor, care for the sick, and do good

deeds. But if a person himself does not know the gospel of the remission of sins, he cannot deliver to others the way of salvation from sin. No one can share with another soul a life he himself does not possess.

On the other hand, the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows what kind of person he was. He believes with his heart the fact that he, too, was born with the nature of sin, lived sinning all his life, and could only receive the judgment of God, but God pitied him without any merit of his own and saved him. Therefore, when he sees someone not yet saved, he sees his own former self rather than despising him.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body, died on the Cross shedding His blood while bearing those sins, and rose again, saving sinners. The person who has been washed of all his sins by believing this gospel knows that he came to life by God's one-sided mercy, and so he earnestly wishes for others to receive the same grace.

The mercy of such a person does not end with thinking, "How pitiful." He prays for the souls that have not received the remission of sins, preaches the gospel in season and out of season, and gives his time, possessions, and labor so that they can hear the word. He does not give up at once when someone rejects the gospel, but patiently explains it again so that the soul may realize the truth. He also unites with the church and carries out the work entrusted to him so that the gospel may be preached to the world.

True mercy is not unconditionally approving another person's false belief and sin as acceptable, either. Because he knows how dangerous the state of not having received the remission of sins is, he may at times clearly point out and

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rebuke a person's wrong belief. But the purpose is not to defeat the other person or display his own righteousness; it is to help him turn from falsehood, believe the true gospel, and live.

A person who has not experienced the mercy of God cannot solve the problem of a soul's sin even if he does ministry or evangelism. He can teach people to live good lives or to pray prayers of repentance diligently, but since he does not know how all sins were passed on to Jesus and judged, he cannot lead anyone to the complete remission of sins. In the end, he may gather people into his religion and organization, but he cannot make them reconciled with God.

The promise *"For they shall obtain mercy"* does not mean that one must first show much mercy to people in order to receive the remission of sins as its reward. The remission of sins is received only by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that when a person already saved by God's mercy pities other souls and serves the gospel, God also looks after his weaknesses and hardships and keeps granting him the help and grace he needs.

Therefore, true spiritual mercy flows out of the heart of the person who has received the mercy of God. The heart that wishes for souls who, like himself, could only have perished to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins together, and go to the kingdom of heaven—and the life that actually prays and labors for that work—this is the blessed image of the merciful.

[Question] 21. Matthew 5:7—there are pastors who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and devote themselves to preaching the gospel with hearts that

pity souls, while there are also pastors who, not knowing this gospel, only gather people, collect offerings, and chase fleshly success. Compare and explain these two ministries.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy."* The starting point of true ministry is a heart that pities souls. The pastor who knows that he himself was first saved from all his sins by the mercy of God pities those who have not yet received the remission of sins and are heading for destruction, and he sets the purpose of his ministry on preaching to them the gospel that gives life.

A true pastor preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross shedding His blood while bearing those sins, and rose again, saving sinners completely. He does not merely tell people to believe in Jesus earnestly; he clearly teaches when and how the sins of mankind were passed on to Jesus and how those sins were judged on the Cross.

A pastor born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not aim to make people members of his own church or his own followers. What he wants is for people to hear the word of God, be saved from all the sins of their hearts and become righteous, and receive the Holy Spirit and become children of God. If one soul can receive the remission of sins, he spends time, money, and strength to preach the word, and after that soul is saved, he nurtures him to grow in faith and serve other souls.

Such a pastor may at times rebuke sin and false belief strongly. But the purpose of that rebuke is not to suppress others or establish his own authority. Because he knows that

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whoever dies without receiving the remission of sins receives everlasting judgment, he helps that soul turn from false belief and believe the true gospel. True mercy is not saying only pleasant things; it is honestly delivering the truth needed to save a person.

A true pastor also does not use the offerings of the saints and the church's material resources to satisfy his own desires. He uses them to make and send gospel books, to raise workers who preach the word, to care for the church and the saints, and to preach the gospel to more souls. He himself labors and sacrifices for the preaching of the gospel and provides practical help and the food of the word so that the saints can live by faith in both spirit and body.

On the other hand, a pastor who does not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit teaches others while he himself still has sin in his heart. Since he does not know how a sinner is washed of all sins at once and becomes righteous, he teaches his congregation that their sins are washed away only if they offer prayers of repentance daily and accumulate good deeds, service, and offerings. As a result, his congregation, even after long years of religious life, still confess themselves sinners and never escape the condemnation of sin.

False ministry regards the number of church members, the size of the church building, the amount of offerings, and the pastor's honor as more important than the problem of the soul's sin. It may promise people material blessings, health, their children's success, and social advancement, and teach that to receive such blessings they must give more offerings, serve more, and be more loyal. Here, people are treated not as souls to be saved but as means of maintaining the pastor's organization and enterprise.

Such a pastor may look gentle and godly on the outside and

may speak much of love and blessing. But if he fails to preach the true gospel of the remission of sins and leaves people to remain sinners, spiritually he is not saving their lives but taking them away. Robbing people of their possessions is evil, but making souls lose the opportunity of salvation through false teaching is a far more fearful plunder.

The difference between the two ministries cannot be judged by the size of the church or the pastor's eloquence and appearance alone. Not every large church is false, nor is a small church or a poor pastor automatically true. Nor is it wrong in itself for a pastor to receive living expenses or for a church to gather offerings. What matters is to examine what gospel is preached, for what purpose the offerings and the church's strength are used, and what spiritual fruit is borne through that ministry.

The fruit of true ministry is that those who hear the word believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins, and serve God as righteous people without sin in their hearts. It is also that the saved unite with the church and grow into workers who pity other souls and preach the gospel. The fruit of false ministry, by contrast, is that people keep sin in their hearts, depend on the pastor's authority and the religious organization, and live seeking only fleshly blessings.

Therefore, the saints must not look only at a pastor's title, fame, and number of members, but must examine the gospel he preaches and its fruit. The ministry that pities souls, preaches the gospel of the remission of sins, and sacrifices itself to lead people to God is the ministry of mercy. But the ministry that cannot solve the problem of the soul's sin and only gathers people to pursue wealth, honor, and fleshly success is not a ministry that saves people.

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God also has mercy on the shortcomings of the servant who pities souls and serves the gospel, and He grants him the wisdom, health, material things, and fellow workers he needs. A true pastor lives sharing this grace with souls again. This is the blessed ministry in which *"the merciful"* receive the mercy of God and save other souls with that mercy.

[Question] 22. In Matthew 5:8, who is the one who will see God?

The one who will see God is the pure in heart. Being pure in heart does not mean that all the shortcomings of the flesh have vanished through many good deeds; it means having received the remission of all the sins of the heart by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished by God.

People cannot make their hearts perfectly clean by their own efforts, good deeds, asceticism, or repeated prayers of repentance. However godly one may look on the outside, if sin remains in the heart, one cannot stand boldly before God. But the person who believes the fact that Jesus Christ fully took on all the sins of the world and was judged for them receives the washing of sin in his heart and conscience and becomes a righteous person without sin.

Even the pure in heart can still be lacking and make mistakes in the flesh. But he does not make his own deeds the standard of salvation; because he believes the word that Jesus Christ completely removed all sins, he is a person without sin before God. He also receives the Holy Spirit into his heart, comes to understand the word and the will of God, and can have fellowship with God.

Therefore, the one who will see God is not the person who

claims to have become clean by his own deeds but the person who has been washed of the sins of his heart completely by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He knows and serves God by faith on this earth, and in the kingdom of God he will see God face to face and live with Him forever.

[Question] 23. Matthew 5:8—explain that those who receive the grace of the remission of sins, display the will of God to the whole world through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, lead souls, live for the preaching of the gospel, and then meet the Lord are the pure in heart.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God."* The pure in heart are not people who make no mistakes in the flesh and live perfectly; they are those who have been washed of all the sins of their hearts by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Human beings cannot make their hearts clean by self-cultivation, good deeds, or religious efforts. They can live outwardly godly lives and restrain evil behavior, but they cannot remove by themselves the sinful nature that comes out of the heart. Nor do daily prayers of repentance completely solve not only the sins already committed but also the sins yet to be committed. Purity of heart is not achieved by man; it comes through the grace of the remission of sins that God bestows.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of mankind—past, present, and future—passed on to His own body. And bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, receiving the punishment of all sins, and

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rose from death, justifying those who believe. When a person believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart, all his sins are washed away, and God acknowledges him as a righteous person without sin.

Being pure in heart includes, along with the fact that sin has disappeared from the heart through faith in the gospel, the purity of one's purpose in seeking God. If the purpose of believing in God lies only in gaining fleshly wealth, honor, health, and success, that heart cannot be called pure. The pure in heart do not try to use God to fulfill their own desires; they believe the salvation God has spoken just as it is and want His will to be done.

The will of God is for everyone to receive the remission of sins and come to salvation. Therefore, the person who has received the remission of sins wants to pass on to others the life he has received. He displays the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, leads the souls still in sin to the Church of God so that they may hear the word, and helps them also receive the remission of sins.

A life for the preaching of the gospel is not limited to preaching from a pulpit. It includes preaching the gospel directly to people, translating the word of the gospel and making it into books, helping gospel preachers, preparing the material things needed, serving the church and caring for the saints, and praying for the evangelization of the world. The pure in heart rejoice more in the righteousness of God and the gospel being revealed than in their own names and merits being displayed.

Even the pure in heart still have the weaknesses and shortcomings of the flesh. They may at times think wrongly and make mistakes, but such shortcomings do not make them sinners with sin in their hearts again. They do not hide or

rationalize their wrongs but admit them before the word of God, hold again to the gospel that has already washed away all their sins, and turn back by faith. And they keep serving the will of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The words *"For they shall see God"* do not mean only seeing the form of God immediately with the eyes of the flesh. The person who has received the remission of sins and in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells comes to realize through the word who God is and to see by faith His will and His working. He prays to God without hindrance and experiences God's help and guidance in his life and in the work of the gospel.

Moreover, the pure in heart will meet the Lord without fear on the last day. Those with sin remaining in their hearts cannot but fear the judgment of God, but the righteous who believe that Jesus has washed away all their sins can stand boldly before the Lord. Living for the gospel on this earth, they will enter the kingdom of God when the Lord calls them and see the Lord face to face.

Therefore, becoming pure in heart is not a result earned by the merit of much gospel preaching. One's heart first becomes pure by receiving the remission of sins through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and from that pure faith the life of serving the will of God and souls appears as fruit. The person who receives the grace of the remission of sins, boasts only of the righteousness of God, gives himself to the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world, and then meets the Lord is the pure in heart of whom God speaks.

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[Question] 24. Explain the meaning of *"the peacemakers"* in Matthew 5:9.

"The peacemakers" means those who preach the true gospel of salvation to people who have become enemies of God because of sin and lead them to be reconciled with God. It does not refer merely to mediating quarrels between people or maintaining good relationships with everyone.

With sin in the heart, no one can enjoy peace with the holy God. Nor can anyone be reconciled with God through good deeds and religious zeal. But when a person believes the fact that Jesus Christ removed all the sins of the world with the water and the Spirit and bore even the judgment of sin, he receives the remission of sins and is reconciled with God.

Therefore, the most important work of making peace is to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately to those who have not yet received the remission of sins, and to help them be saved from sin and become children of God. The peacemaker is the one who preaches the gospel to reconcile sinners with God and leads those who resented or feared God to believe in the grace of salvation and serve God with gratitude.

The peacemaker also does not stir up hatred and division among the saints; he helps them bear with one another's shortcomings and live in harmony within the word. Yet he is not a person who abandons the truth or compromises with false teaching to create outward peace only. True peace must be built on the righteousness and truth of God.

Therefore, the peacemakers are those who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to reconcile sinners with God, and who help the saved saints unite with one another in the word of God and serve the gospel.

[Question] 25. According to Matthew 5:9, what are the peacemakers called, and what is the blessing given to them?

The peacemakers receive the blessing of being called sons of God. This means that those who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people who have become enemies of God because of sin and lead them to be reconciled with God are acknowledged and called children of God.

These words do not mean that one can become a child of God only by doing many good deeds of making peace. A person first becomes a child of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, having all his sins remitted, and receiving the Holy Spirit as a gift. Then he lives passing on the grace of salvation he has received to other souls so that they too may be reconciled with God.

Therefore, being called sons of God means the blessing of being acknowledged as one who displays the love of God the Father and His will of salvation and does the work worthy of God's children. He saves souls through the gospel and serves so that the saints may live in harmony and unity in the truth.

[Question] 26. In Matthew 5:10, what does it mean to be persecuted for righteousness' sake?

To be persecuted for righteousness' sake means not suffering blame and hardship because of one's own faults or stubbornness, but receiving hatred, opposition, and suffering while believing in the righteousness God has accomplished and preaching and serving the gospel of that righteousness.

The righteousness of God is the righteous work by which

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Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross shedding His blood while bearing those sins, and then rose again from death, saving sinners completely. When a person believes and preaches that only this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the true truth that removes all human sins, he can meet opposition and persecution from those who hold to their own righteousness and wrong religious teachings.

Such persecution can include being mocked and reviled for preaching the gospel, being accused of heresy, being rejected by family and those close to one, and losing relationships or suffering social disadvantage. At times one may also have to sacrifice one's time, possessions, and comfort and endure hardship for the preaching of the gospel.

But not all suffering is persecution for righteousness. One must not regard the pain suffered because of one's own pride, rudeness, wrong behavior, or worldly greed as persecution for the gospel. It must be suffering received while keeping the righteousness of God and the truth of salvation, preaching the gospel to other souls, and serving the will of God.

Nor does the act of being persecuted itself become a merit for obtaining the remission of sins or entering the kingdom of heaven. Persecution follows when a person who has first received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit lives serving the righteousness of God. Therefore, to be persecuted for righteousness means that the saved righteous keep and preach the gospel by faith, without abandoning it or compromising, even amid the world's opposition and hardship.

[Question] 27. What reasons do Matthew 5:11–12 give for those persecuted because of Jesus to rejoice and be glad?

The first reason to rejoice and be glad even when we are reviled and persecuted because of Jesus and people say all kinds of evil against us falsely is that our reward in heaven is great. God does not forget the labor and suffering endured while believing, keeping, and preaching the gospel, and He will repay them with a great reward in the kingdom of God.

The second reason is that the prophets of God who lived before us received the same persecution. The prophets delivered the word of God as it was and were hated and rejected by the kings, religious leaders, and people of their day. Therefore, being persecuted because of Jesus and the gospel is not proof that a person is on the wrong path; it can be evidence that he is following the truth of God as the prophets before him did.

This does not mean that suffering and insult are enjoyable in themselves. Persecution is painful and hard for the flesh, but we can rejoice because of the fact that we are suffering for Jesus Christ and the righteousness of God, and because of the promise that God acknowledges our faith and labor.

Moreover, this reward does not mean that we obtain the remission of sins as the merit of having endured persecution. The remission of sins is received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the heavenly reward is the recompense God gives for the labor of those already saved who have served and kept the gospel. Therefore, the saints must not lose heart before persecution or abandon the gospel, but must endure by faith, looking to the reward of the kingdom of God and the example of the prophets.

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[Question] 28. In Matthew 5:13, what role are those who follow Christ given in the world?

Those who follow Christ are given the role of the salt of the world. As salt keeps food from decaying and brings out its flavor, the righteous who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must guard and preach the truth of salvation in a world that is decaying with sin and falsehood.

The world follows the desires of the flesh and the teachings of false religion without realizing that sin is sin. At such a time, the saints must make clear, with the word of God as the standard, what sin is and what the righteousness of God is, and must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that people do not perish in sin. Making sinners receive the remission of sins and become children of God through the gospel is the most important role of salt in holding back the corruption of the world.

Also, as salt seeps into food and brings out its flavor, the saved must serve the gospel in union with the church, each in the place entrusted to him. They must preach the gospel directly, or help its spread with prayer, service, and material things, and display the grace and righteousness of God to the world by serving others with love and mercy.

Therefore, those who follow Christ are not people who mix with the world and lose the truth of the gospel; they are the salt of the world, who keep and preach the righteousness of God so that souls may receive the remission of sins. This is the important mission Jesus has entrusted to the saved saints.

[Question] 29. In Matthew 5:14, what do Jesus' words calling His disciples "*the light of the world*" mean?

Jesus called His disciples the light of the world because those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have received the mission of displaying God's salvation and truth in a world darkened by sin and falsehood.

When light shines, what was hidden in the darkness is revealed, and people can find the way they should go. Likewise, the saints must make people realize the sins in their hearts through the word of God and let them know the fact that they cannot solve their sins by their own deeds. And they must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished by Jesus Christ and light up the way of the remission of sins and everlasting life.

The disciples do not produce light from themselves. They became the light of the world because they were saved by believing in Jesus Christ, the true light, and have the light of the gospel He accomplished in their hearts. Therefore, the saints must display not their own knowledge and good deeds but the salvation of Jesus Christ and the righteousness of God.

As a city set on a hill cannot be hidden, the faith and gospel life of the saved come to be revealed to the world. The saints must preach the gospel, serve souls in union with the church, and show works of love and mercy so that people may give glory to God. This is the meaning of the words that the disciples are the light of the world.

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[Question] 30. In Matthew 5:15–16, where is a lamp placed, and what role does it play?

After lighting a lamp, people do not hide it under a basket but set it on a lampstand. A lamp set on a lampstand gives light to everyone in the house, brightening the darkness and enabling people to distinguish things and find the right way.

This lamp represents the role that the saints who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must play in the world. The righteous must not hide the truth of salvation God has given only in their own hearts but must shine it clearly into a world darkened by sin and falsehood. That is, they must preach the gospel accomplished by Jesus Christ so that people may realize their sins and find the way of the remission of sins.

That the saints shine light before people does not mean exalting themselves or boasting of their own good deeds. It is preaching the gospel, serving other souls, and practicing love and mercy so that people may see those good works and give glory to God the Father in heaven.

Therefore, a lamp is set on a lampstand so that its light may reach everyone, and that light brightens the darkness and shows the way of truth. In the same way, the saved righteous must display the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the world and carry out the mission of light so that other souls may be saved.

[Question] 31. In Matthew 5:17, what relation does the coming of Jesus Christ have to the Law?

Jesus Christ came not to abolish the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them. This means that Jesus did not come to

nullify the Law of the Old Testament or to do away with the word of God, but to fulfill Himself all the saving will that the Law and the prophets pointed to and prophesied.

The Law displays the holiness of God, makes clear what sin is, and declares that whoever sins must receive judgment and death. But because all people break the Law with their hearts and deeds, no one can become righteous by keeping the Law perfectly through his own efforts. The Law exposes people's sins and makes them realize that they are complete sinners in need of a Savior.

Jesus lived without sin under the Law and became the substance of the salvation that the sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament pointed to. Through the baptism He received from John, He had all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body, and bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, fully bearing the punishment of sin that the Law demands. And by rising from death, He overcame the power of sin and death and completed salvation.

Therefore, Jesus did not abolish the Law; with His own body He fulfilled the just demand of the Law that the price of sin must be paid with death. He also actually accomplished the work of Christ that the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and the prophecies of the prophets pointed to. Thus, those who believe in Jesus receive the remission of sins not by the works of the Law but by believing in the righteousness of God He accomplished.

This does not mean, however, that those who have received the remission of sins may disregard the Law. The Law shows the saved, too, the will of God and His holy standard, and it leads them to realize their fleshly wrongs and turn back by faith. Therefore, the coming of Jesus Christ was not an event that abolished the Law but the event that completely fulfilled,

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through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all the saving will that the Law demanded and prophesied.

[Question] 32. In Matthew 5:18, how did Jesus say that the Law will not pass away?

Jesus said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."*

"One jot or one tittle" refers to the smallest stroke and dot that make up a letter. These words therefore mean that not even the seemingly smallest word of the Law can be removed or nullified at will, and that the will God has ordained is fulfilled without fail, exactly as it stands. He clearly emphasized the fact that it is more impossible for the word of God to pass away than for heaven and earth to pass away.

The Law, as the holy standard of God, exposes man's sin, declares judgment on sin, and points to the salvation Jesus Christ would accomplish. Jesus did not abolish the Law; He completely fulfilled all its demands and prophecies through His saving work. Therefore, people must not cast away or take lightly the Law according to their own thoughts; through that word they must realize their sins and believe in the righteousness of God accomplished by Jesus Christ.

[Question] 33. According to Matthew 5:19, who will be called least in the kingdom of heaven?

Whoever breaks even one of the least of the commandments of the Law and teaches others to do the same

will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

This means that we must not divide the word of God into important and unimportant parts by human judgment, or teach that small commandments need not be kept. It is wrong to disregard the commandments and the Law of God on the grounds of having received the remission of sins, or to teach the saints that they need not follow the will of God.

The words *"least in the kingdom of heaven"* are not so much a statement that such a person loses salvation by works because he broke a small commandment; they are a warning that for taking the word of God lightly and teaching others wrongly, he will fail to receive recognition and reward in the kingdom of God and will be regarded as a small person there. Therefore, the saved saints must not try to obtain salvation through the Law, but they must honor the word of God, teach it rightly, and obey it by faith.

[Question] 34. According to Matthew 5:20, whose righteousness must ours exceed to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Jesus said that to enter the kingdom of heaven, one must have a righteousness better than the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

The scribes and Pharisees kept the outward works of the Law and its religious ordinances and considered themselves righteous. But however godly their outward behavior looked, sin, greed, pride, and hypocrisy remained in their hearts. Their righteousness, therefore, was a human righteousness built on their own deeds.

The righteousness better than that of the scribes and

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Pharisees is not a righteousness obtained by doing more good deeds or keeping the Law more strictly than they did. It is the perfect righteousness received by believing in the righteousness of God, which Jesus Christ accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only those who believe this gospel, have all the sins of their hearts remitted, and become righteous people without sin can enter the kingdom of heaven.

[Question] 35. Matthew 5:21—what is the content of the old teaching, "*You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment*"?

The content of the old teaching is that one must not kill a person, and that whoever actually murders will receive judgment for that sin. This corresponds to the sixth of the Ten Commandments God gave in the Law.

This commandment teaches that human life is given by God, so no one may take another person's life at will. Murder is a grave sin that destroys the life of a person made in the image of God, and the one who commits it comes under God's just judgment.

The people of that time applied these words mainly to the outward act of actually killing a person. But in the words that follow, Jesus did not confine the problem of murder to the act alone; He exposed even the heart that is angry with, hates, and despises one's brother as the root of murder. Through this He taught the fact that the Law of God judges not only a person's outward appearance but even the sins of the heart.

[Question] 36. In Matthew 5:22, what words and hearts did Jesus say would bring the same judgment as the murderer's?

Jesus said that whoever harbors anger against his brother will be in danger of the judgment, and that whoever despises his brother, saying *"Raca!"* or *"You fool!"* cannot escape the judgment of God either. *"Raca"* is a word of contempt that belittles a person as useless and worthless.

Murder begins first with the hatred and anger in the heart. Even if a person has not actually killed anyone, if he hates his brother in his heart, regards him as worthless, and insults and curses him with his mouth, the root of murder has already taken hold in his heart. Since God examines not only outward actions but the heart and thoughts, such a person, too, is a sinner who will be judged before the Law like a murderer.

Jesus did not mean by these words that actual murder and anger always receive the same punishment in the world's courts. Man's law judges outward acts, but God's law judges as sin even the heart where hatred, anger, and contempt have settled.

Therefore, no one should consider himself righteous merely because he has not murdered. He must acknowledge even the sins of hating and despising his brother in his heart, cast away his own righteousness, and believe in the grace of the remission of sins God has given. And those who have received the remission of sins must not justify anger and contempt but strive to be reconciled with their brothers and treat them with love.

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[Question] 37. Matthew 5:23–26—what must be done first before offering a gift to God?

If, while offering a gift to God, we remember that our brother has something against us, we must leave the gift before the altar and first go to that brother and be reconciled. After that, we must come back and offer the gift to God.

This means that the worship and gifts offered to God cannot be a means of covering the wrongs done to people. If we have wounded or harmed a brother and yet turn away from it and only offer formal worship, it cannot be called right faith that pleases God. We must first admit our wrongs, ask for forgiveness, and try to set the relationship right as far as we can.

Also, while we are on the way with the one who accuses us, we must quickly reconcile before being handed over to the judge. If we leave the problem alone in pride and stubbornness, it finally leads to judgment and punishment, and we cannot escape the consequences until we have paid everything we owe. Therefore, when hatred and resentment arise, we must not put them off but resolve them quickly.

These words do not mean that we obtain the remission of sins by the act of being reconciled with people. The remission of sins is received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but the saved must not separate the life of worshiping God from the life of loving their brothers. To offer gifts to God truthfully, we must first look back on our own wrongs and strive to be reconciled with our brothers.

[Question] 38. In Matthew 5:27–28, what case did Jesus regard as already adultery?

Jesus regarded as adultery not only the case of actually committing physical adultery but even the case of looking at a woman and harboring lust, as having already committed adultery in the heart.

This refers not so much to simply seeing a person of the other sex or having a momentary thought pass by, as to looking at someone as an object of lewd desire and receiving that thought into the heart and enjoying it. Even if that desire has not been carried into outward action, before God, who examines the heart and thoughts, the sin of adultery has already been committed.

Through these words, Jesus made clear the fact that the Law judges not only a person's outward actions but even the desires within the heart. Therefore, no one can claim to be righteous merely because he has not actually committed adultery. Before these words, people must realize the sins of their hearts, cast away their own righteousness, and believe in the grace of the remission of sins accomplished by Jesus Christ.

[Question] 39. In Matthew 5:29–30, with what illustration did Jesus emphasize the wretched result that sin brings?

Jesus emphasized the wretched result that sin brings with the illustration of plucking out the right eye if it causes one to sin and cutting off the right hand if it causes one to sin. He said that it is better to lose one part of the body than for the whole body to be cast into hell.

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The eye and the hand are very important to a person, but the judgment of hell, the result of sin, is far more fearful and weighty. The words mean, therefore, that we must not take sin lightly or keep harboring it in our hearts, but must decisively cut off the desires and temptations that lead us to sin.

But these words are not a command that one must actually pluck out an eye or cut off a hand to be saved from sin. Since sin comes not from the eye or the hand itself but from the human heart, removing a part of the body does not remove the sin of the heart. Rather, through such a strong illustration, He made clearly known the seriousness of sin and the fearfulness of judgment.

Moreover, people cannot remove all the sins of their hearts by their own resolutions and efforts. Therefore, before these words, we must admit that we are sinners who cannot keep God's holy standard, and believe in the perfect remission of sins that Jesus Christ accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Realizing our sins and coming to the Savior is the true way to escape the judgment of hell.

[Question] 40. Matthew 5:31–32—why must a husband not divorce his wife without the cause of sexual immorality?

It is because if a husband divorces his wife without the cause of her sexual immorality, he causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries the divorced woman also commits adultery. Sexual immorality here refers to sexual sin that breaks the fidelity between husband and wife.

In those days there were people who thought they could cast off their wives as long as they wrote a certificate of

divorce. But Jesus taught that giving a formal certificate of divorce does not make a divorce without just cause right before God. If a husband sends his wife away because of his own greed, weariness, trivial conflicts, or personal convenience, he breaks the covenant of marriage God has established.

In particular, a woman cast off in those days was easily placed in a situation where she had to marry another man to survive. Therefore, the husband who cast off his wife without just cause could not be free from the responsibility of pushing her into another marriage and so causing her to commit adultery. And the man who married such a woman also came to participate in adultery, disregarding the marriage relationship God had first established.

These words mean that marriage must not be treated as a relationship that can be made and broken easily according to human feelings and convenience. Husband and wife must not treat each other like possessions but cherish each other as covenant spouses joined before God, and when difficulties arise, they must strive for harmony with love and patience rather than casting each other off rashly.

[Question] 41. Explain Jesus' teaching about oaths in Matthew 5:33–37.

The old teaching said not to swear falsely but to keep whatever one had sworn to the Lord. But Jesus went a step further and taught us not to swear at all. It means that we must not rashly drag in the name of God or the things that belong to Him to guarantee the truthfulness of our words.

Jesus said not to swear by heaven, for heaven is the throne of God. We must not swear by the earth, for it is His footstool,

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nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor can we swear by our own heads, for no one can make even a single hair white or black by his own power.

This shows the fact that neither heaven, nor the earth, nor Jerusalem, nor even one's own life is man's possession; everything is under the sovereignty of God. People who cannot control even their own tomorrow and their own lives must not boast that they will surely accomplish something or guarantee with an oath promises they have no power to keep.

Therefore, Jesus taught that our words must be honest and plain enough to say that what is right is right and that what is not is not. A person who speaks the truth in everyday life has no need to add exaggerated oaths to make his words believed. Using oaths to hide falsehood or deceive others is something that comes from evil.

These words also reveal that human beings are imperfect beings who cannot perfectly keep even their own words and promises. People must acknowledge their insufficiency before the Law and believe in the salvation of Jesus Christ, and after receiving the remission of sins, they must cast away falsehood and exaggeration and live speaking truthful and responsible words as children of God.

[Question] 42. In Matthew 5:38–42, what did Jesus teach about the law of revenge in the Old Testament?

The law of revenge in the Old Testament was the principle of repaying an eye with an eye and a tooth with a tooth. This law was meant to limit the scope of punishment so that no one would take revenge excessively beyond the harm received, and

to have responsibility charged fairly through trial. But people also used these words as grounds for justifying personal grudges and revenge.

Jesus taught us not to resist an evil person, and to turn the left cheek also to the one who strikes the right. He also told us to give our cloak as well to the one who sues us for our tunic, to go two miles with the one who compels us to go one mile, to give to him who asks, and not to turn away from him who wants to borrow.

This does not mean approving evil as good or leaving every unlawful act as it is. It means not repaying the loss and insult we have suffered in kind out of hatred and anger, and, rather than asserting our own rights to the end, being patient, yielding, and treating others with good. The people of the kingdom of heaven must not be people who repay evil with evil like the people of the world; they must be people who display the love and mercy of God.

But human beings in the flesh cannot practice these words perfectly. Because people grow angry and try to retaliate when they suffer loss, before these words they must realize that they are sinners who cannot reach God's holy standard. And after receiving the remission of sins by believing in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished, they must endure, yield, and do good by faith in the Lord.

Therefore, Jesus' teaching is not to use the law of revenge of the Old Testament as a means of personal retaliation, but to show love and mercy even to the point of laying down one's own rights. The saved saints must seek the help of the Holy Spirit rather than relying on their own strength, and must live lives that are not overcome by evil but do good by faith.

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[Question] 43. What is Jesus' teaching about love recorded in Matthew 5:43–44?

People thought they could love their neighbors and hate their enemies, but Jesus taught us to love even our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. It is the word that we must not stop at loving only those who treat us well but must display the love of God even to those who harm and hate us.

Loving one's enemy does not mean approving the evil he has done as right or compromising with false teaching. It means not harboring personal hatred and vengefulness, but treating him with good, hoping that he will turn from sin and receive the salvation of God. In particular, the greatest love is to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to an enemy who has not yet received the remission of sins and to help him be saved from everlasting destruction.

Praying for those who persecute us also does not mean asking God to punish them at once; it means praying that they will realize their sins and wrongs and receive the grace of God and be saved. The saints must entrust their wounds and grievances to God, not repay evil with evil, and pity the soul of the other person.

It is impossible to love one's enemies with the strength of the flesh alone. But the person who believes that he, too, was originally a sinner and an enemy of God yet was saved by the love and mercy of Jesus Christ can, relying on that grace, forgive his enemy and pray for him. Therefore, Jesus' teaching is to widen the scope of love beyond our neighbors to our enemies and those who persecute us.

[Question] 44. Matthew 5:45–47—why must the children of God love even their enemies?

The children of God must love even their enemies because God the Father is the merciful God who makes His sun shine on both the evil and the good and sends rain on both the just and the unjust. The children of God must display this love and character of the Father to the world.

Loving only those who love us is something even the tax collectors do, and greeting only our brethren is something even the Gentiles do. Being good to those who are good to us and drawing near only to those who benefit us is worldly love. With such love alone, the life of the people of the kingdom of heaven cannot be said to differ from the life of the people of the world.

God loved us even when we did not know Him and stood as His enemies because of sin. He sent Jesus Christ to solve all our sins, and He has made those who believe in that salvation righteous people without sin and His own children. The person who knows that he first received the mercy and love of God without any merit can pity and love even the soul of the one who hates and persecutes him.

Loving one's enemy does not mean accepting his evil deeds and falsehood or abandoning the truth and compromising. It means not taking revenge out of personal resentment, but praying and doing good in the hope that he will turn from sin, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and be saved. The greatest love we can give an enemy is to preach to him the true gospel so that he may receive the remission of sins and be reconciled with God.

Nor does it mean that one must love one's enemies to earn the qualification to become a child of God. One becomes a

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child of God by receiving the remission of sins through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the life of loving one's enemies is the fruit of faith in which one who has already become God's child displays the Father's love.

[Question] 45. Matthew 5:48—what is the goal that the children of God must aim for, looking to the perfection of God?

The goal that the children of God must aim for is to follow the perfection of God the Father in heaven and live with perfect faith, practicing the righteousness and love of God. This means not stopping at loving only those who love us, but loving even our enemies, praying for those who persecute us, not repaying evil with evil, and showing mercy.

But human beings cannot become perfect like God by the efforts and resolutions of the flesh. People have the nature that grows angry and hates in the heart, harbors lust and covetousness, and tries to take revenge on those who harm them. Therefore, these words do not mean that a person should perfect his deeds and so obtain salvation by himself. Rather, they teach the fact that before God's holy standard, one must realize that one is a complete sinner and must not rely on one's own righteousness and deeds.

The way for a person to become a perfect righteous person before God lies in believing fully in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all our sins passed on to His own body; bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, fully bearing the judgment of sin; and by rising from death, He completed salvation. Whoever believes this gospel of the water

and the Spirit with his heart has all his sins remitted and becomes a righteous person without sin before God.

Therefore, what the children of God need is not to look only at their insufficient flesh and lose heart, but the faith that looks to Jesus Christ, who has saved them perfectly. The deeds of the flesh may still be lacking, but when we believe the fact that all the sins of mankind were passed on to Jesus and judged on the Cross, we obtain the standing of perfectly righteous people before God. And with this faith we can pray, be reconciled with our brothers, love our enemies, and do the righteous work of preaching the gospel.

Therefore, the goal verse 48 presents is not to achieve fleshly perfection and establish one's own righteousness. It is first to believe fully in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and become righteous without sin before God, and then, relying on that faith, to live displaying the love, mercy, and righteousness of God. That is, living as children of God who keep looking to the Lord who saved us perfectly and do perfect works by faith is the goal the saints must aim for. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The poor in spirit are filled with the righteousness of God

< Matthew 5:1-6 >

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."

The blessed person is the one who is poor in spirit

Today's passage is the word Jesus taught His disciples after going up on a mountain. People think that the blessed are those who have much money, are healthy, and have risen high in the world. But the blessing Jesus spoke of is different from people's thoughts. He said that the poor in spirit, those who mourn over their sins, those who are meek before the word of God, and those who hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God are blessed.

What blessing are you seeking? Is the purpose of your believing in Jesus to eat well and live well in this world? Do you think you have been blessed by God when your business goes well, your children succeed, and your body is healthy, and that you have not been blessed when they do not? Such things are

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necessary for the flesh, but they are not the blessing that brings a soul into the kingdom of heaven. Even if a person gains everything in the world, if there is sin in his heart, he cannot escape the judgment of God.

Jesus did not name great wealth or excellent deeds as the first condition of a blessed person. He said one must be poor in spirit. This does not mean that one is saved merely by having no money. There are people who, though they have much property, know that their souls are empty and that the things of the world cannot solve the problem of sin and death. Conversely, there are people who live in poverty and yet are full of their own righteousness and refuse to accept the word of God. What the Lord looks at is not the size of one's bank account but one's spirit.

Why is the kingdom of heaven given to the poor in spirit? Because only those who know the fact that they have no righteousness within themselves to enter the kingdom of heaven seek the righteousness God gives. Those who think they are fairly good and have done well in their religious lives do not want to receive as a gift the salvation the Lord completed. They try to add even a little of their own merit. But those who know that they have no righteousness at all to present accept the salvation God has bestowed just as it is.

Jesus did not say that the poor in spirit might perhaps be blessed someday. He said they are already blessed and that the kingdom of heaven is theirs. Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and the kingdom of God has been established within them. They do not merely have the hope of entering the kingdom of God in the future; they have become children of God now and enjoy the life of heaven.

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The things of the world cannot fill a person's empty heart

The human heart is not filled with the things of the world. When we have no money, it seems we would be satisfied if only we earned a lot; when our position is low, it seems we would be happy if only we rose higher. But once we gain it, we look for something else. We fear losing what we have, fight to have more than others, and in the end meet death unable to take a single thing we have gathered.

God spoke to the thirsty like this: *"'Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you— The sure mercies of David" (Isaiah 55:1–3).* However much people labor for what is not bread, the soul is not filled. The soul comes to life when it hears the word of God and believes the covenant of promise, the everlasting covenant.

Many people try to cover the emptiness of their hearts with worldly pleasures or religious zeal. They try to forget it with drink and amusements, or by gathering money and winning people's recognition. Others fast, pray all night, and think they have met God if they see a vision. But sin does not disappear because one's feelings grow fervent or one has had a strange experience. Sin is not removed by feelings; it had to be passed on to Jesus Christ through the baptism of John and be judged, in the way God ordained.

Faith is not stubbornly insisting that an invisible illusion is

fact. It is knowing and believing the facts of salvation God has recorded in the Scriptures. It is not hypnotizing oneself into thinking that there is no sin in one's heart when there is, if only one believes. It is confirming from the word and believing when, to whom, and how that sin was actually passed on, where the price of that sin was paid, and how the Savior rose from death.

The psalmist confessed, *"As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" (Psalms 42:1–2)*. What a thirsty deer needs is not knowledge about water but actual water. Likewise, what a soul thirsty because of sin needs is not religious theory but the living water of the righteousness of God, which actually removed sin.

With what is your heart filled? Do you think you lack nothing, relying on the little you have in the world? If death came to you today, could that property, that knowledge, and that religious career deliver you from judgment? They could not. The person who knows this fact is the one who is poor in spirit. Such a person does not boast of what is his but seeks the word of life.

Those who mourn look honestly at their sins and their inability

Jesus said that those who mourn are blessed and that they shall be comforted. Mourning here does not mean only grieving because the affairs of the flesh have not gone one's way. It is discovering one's sins and inability before the word of God and grieving over them. Even when people want to live rightly, they see evil thoughts keep coming out of their hearts and see themselves committing again the sins they had resolved not to commit.

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The Scriptures do not hide what comes out of the human heart. They say, *"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)*. People did not become sinners by accident because their surroundings were bad. Evil things keep coming out of a heart full of fundamental sin.

The Apostle Paul, too, looking at his own flesh before the Law and knowing that nothing fundamentally good was in him, confessed: *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:18–24)*.

Have you, too, resolved to live a good life? Has that resolve never once crumbled in your whole life? People can correct their behavior to some degree, but they cannot completely change the flesh itself, which produces sin. Holding back anger today does not guarantee holding it back tomorrow, and not doing evil outwardly does not mean the heart is clean. The person who knows himself accurately does not merely say, "I am a little lacking." He mourns that he cannot escape this body of death by his own strength.

But mourning itself does not wash away sin. Nor does shedding many tears reduce the price of sin. Mourning makes us seek the Savior, but salvation is accomplished by the Savior. We must not spend our whole lives sinning and weeping, sinning again and weeping again, and think of that as the remission of sins. The comfort the Lord gives is not words that soothe the heart for a moment; it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the salvation that actually ended the cause of sin and its judgment.

The meek exalt the word of God above their own thoughts

Jesus said that the meek will inherit the earth. People think of meekness only as having a quiet voice and a soft personality. But however soft a person may look, if he rejects the word of God, he is not spiritually meek. Conversely, even if a person is quick-tempered and has shortcomings in the flesh, if he breaks his own thoughts and receives the word of God as it is, he is meek before the word.

When people hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, human thinking and the word of God collide. People have been taught that sins disappear if they believe only in the blood of the Cross, and they have assumed that God merely regards them as righteous even though sin remains in their hearts. But the Scriptures say that because sins were actually passed on to Jesus through the baptism of John, and because He was actually judged for those sins on the Cross and rose from death, there is no sin in the heart of the one who believes. At this point, if a person clings to his own doctrines and experiences to the end, he cannot accept the truth.

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The meek person does not correct the Scriptures because they differ from his thoughts. He acknowledges before God that he himself has been wrong. If God has established the law of passing on sin, he believes that law; if Jesus said that one must be born again of water and the Spirit, he accepts that word. Being meek before God is not practicing a self-lowering way of speaking; it is simply saying "Amen" to God's verdict.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, *"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:3–5).* Nicodemus was a teacher of Israel, but he could not understand being born again with his own knowledge. We enter the kingdom of God not by human effort and works but by being born again of the water and the Spirit, which give us the remission of sins.

Are you a person who judges the word of God, or a person who is judged by the word? If you pick out and believe only the words you understand and discard the words you do not, you are believing not God but your own thoughts. The poor in spirit are not full of their own knowledge. When they hear the word and discover their wrong, they turn. That is why God gives His kingdom as an inheritance to the meek.

Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness seek not man's righteousness but the righteousness of God

The passage says that those who hunger and thirst for

righteousness are blessed and that they shall be filled. Righteousness here does not mean the merit of having lived better than others. It means the right work of God, who saved sinners so that they have no sin—the righteousness of God. Those who are full of man's righteousness count what they have done. They say they have prayed much, given offerings, and helped others. But those who hunger for the righteousness of God know that their own deeds cannot remove sin, and they seek and accept the salvation God has performed.

What do the Scriptures say is revealed in the gospel? "*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" (Romans 1:17)*. In the gospel is revealed not human zeal but the righteousness of God. What is this righteousness? It is that Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist, had all the sins of the world passed on to Him, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose from death, removing all the sins of mankind. When a sinner simply believes in this righteousness of God, at that moment he receives the remission of sins and becomes righteous.

Man's righteousness is not perfect before God. One can do good today and evil tomorrow, and one can act godly in front of others while harboring greed and hatred in the heart. With such righteousness no one can stand before the judgment seat. The righteousness God requires is perfect righteousness without a single sin. Because man does not have that righteousness, God Himself accomplished the righteousness of salvation for us.

To hunger and thirst for righteousness does not mean only vaguely wanting to become a good person. It is seeking the righteousness of God that completely removes my sins, and, after receiving the remission of sins, wanting to preach this righteousness to other souls as well. As a starving person looks for food, we seek the righteousness of God, and as one who has

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drunk water shows the spring to another thirsty person, we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The righteousness of God was completed through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

God did not merely say that sins were gone. On the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament, He showed how the sins of the people of Israel were passed on to the sacrificial offering: "'*And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:20–22)*. It was not that the sins stayed with the sinner while God merely declared them gone. In the Old Testament, God promised the way of removing sin: through the laying on of the high priest's hands, a year's sins were passed onto the head of an unblemished offering, and that offering bore the people's sins.

To fulfill this shadow of the Old Testament, this word of the covenant, Jesus Christ came by the Holy Spirit in a sinless body. When He turned thirty, Jesus received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and so had the sins of the whole world passed on to His body and took them upon Himself; He was crucified, received the judgment of God, shed His blood and actually died, and rose again on the third day, completing our salvation once and for all.

"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18). This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this is the righteousness of God.

See clearly from the word the scene where Jesus fulfilled all righteousness: *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:13–17)*. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sins of the whole world passed on to Him to fulfill all righteousness; He shed His blood for those sins on the Cross, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and was judged in our place; and He rose from death and justified those who believe.

That is why John the Baptist saw Jesus the next day and testified of Him like this: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.' And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that*

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this is the Son of God.'" (John 1:29–34). Bearing the sins of the world that had been passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus died on the Cross, shedding His blood, and rose from the dead on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose from death, completing salvation as the Lamb of God. Whoever believes receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

If you believe only in the Cross and do not know when sins were passed on to Jesus, you are not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The sinless Jesus did not die for no reason. Because Jesus had sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, He bore death, the wages of sin, on the Cross, and rose again on the third day. Not one link may be removed from this flow: sins were passed on through the baptism, those sins were judged on the Cross, and salvation was completed through the resurrection.

The Scriptures state these three witnesses clearly: *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8)*. The Spirit, the water, and the blood agree as one and testify of the one salvation. Whoever believes this with his heart receives the remission of sins not by his own deeds but by the righteousness of God.

The righteous live doing the righteousness of God

The word that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness shall be filled does not end with the remission of sins. In the

person whose sins are gone, having received the righteousness of God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there arises the desire for other souls also to hear this gospel and be saved. This is not a merit forced out in order to be saved. It is the fruit that comes from the heart of the righteous who have already received the remission of sins and have the Holy Spirit within.

Even the saved righteous have greed and weakness in the flesh. They did not become righteous because their flesh became perfect. There is no sin in the believer's heart because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, took on even all the sins he would commit throughout his life, was judged for those sins on the Cross, dying with His blood shed, and rose from death. The righteous honestly admit the weakness of the flesh, but they do not call themselves sinners again. They believe God's verdict and live in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If the saved live following only the desires of the world, their hearts cannot be glad either. The Holy Spirit rejoices when the righteousness of God is preached and souls are saved. So when the righteous give their bodies, time, and possessions for the preaching of the gospel and hear the news that someone has received the remission of sins through their labor, they enjoy a fullness that cannot be had in the world. It is a different kind of satisfaction from that which comes from piling up money.

This does not mean that everyone must do the same work. Some preach the word, some make literature, and some support the work with material things, skills, and labor so that it may continue. What matters is not exalting one's own name but making the righteousness of God be preached. A small task is not trivial, nor is a conspicuous task more righteous. Every labor done by faith for the benefit of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a work that serves the righteousness of God.

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For what are you hungry and thirsty? Do you seek only more property and a more comfortable life? Or do you want the souls still in sin to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins? To those who hunger for the righteousness of God, God opens the way to do righteousness and lets them see its fruit. He fills their hearts with the joy of seeing a soul escape from sin through the preaching of the gospel.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, and hunger for righteousness are not words separated from one another. The one who knows that he cannot fill his soul with the things of the world is poor in spirit. The one who has seen his sins and inability before the word of God mourns. The one who lays down his own thoughts and accepts the written salvation is meek. And the one who asks God for the perfect righteousness he does not have is the one who hungers and thirsts for righteousness.

God does not send such people away empty-handed. He lets them hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe the fact that Jesus had the sins of the whole world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose from death, completing salvation. Through that faith He remits all their sins, gives them the Holy Spirit, makes them children of God, and grants them the everlasting kingdom of heaven as their inheritance.

The Scriptures declare that a person is not justified by his own works: *"knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not*

by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Galatians 2:16). Those who are full of their own righteousness cannot accept this word, but the poor in spirit joyfully accept the work of Jesus, who saved us from sin.

If there is still sin in your heart, do not hide it. Do not comfort yourself, saying you have believed for a long time so you must be all right. Having sin means you have not yet fully believed in the righteousness of God. Lay down your doctrines and experiences and listen to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God fills the poor in spirit and those who hunger for righteousness with the righteousness of God.

Those who have already received the remission of sins by believing this gospel must clearly know the blessing they have received. Difficult circumstances of the flesh do not make you unblessed. Even if your name is not high in the world, the kingdom of heaven is yours; you have received comfort from God; you have received the kingdom of God as your inheritance; and you have become righteous people who can live filled, doing righteousness. This is the blessing Jesus spoke of.

We are not people who will be filled for a moment with the things of the world and then leave everything behind. We are people who have obtained everlasting life by believing in the righteousness of God and who will live the rest of our lives preaching this righteousness. Let us give thanks to God, who gives the kingdom of heaven to the poor in spirit, the comfort of the remission of sins to those who mourn, faith in the word to the meek, and the blessing of everlasting fullness to those who hunger for righteousness. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Live for the work of showing mercy and making peace

< Matthew 5:1-10 >

"And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

The news of the gospel we preach

The news of the gospel we preach is being delivered to every corner of the world through e-books, paper books, audio, combined volumes, and our website. Tens of thousands of people visit our website every day. Very many people take the e-books, the audio, and the combined volumes. The paper books, too, are going out to the whole world. It is a truly amazing thing,

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and we are thankful.

Those who show mercy and preach the gospel are blessed

Today let us look at Matthew 5:7–9.

"Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God."

These words were spoken about us, who preach the gospel. Pitying people, we hand out these gospel books. We labor and take pains for them, delivering e-books, paper books, and audio. Seeing us working like this, having mercy on people, the Lord said that we are blessed.

He said that they shall obtain mercy. In fact, if this work were a useless religious work, we would not need to do it. As for religion, anyone can believe it and like it, so it would be enough just to tell them to believe. But this gospel is not like that. It is because people go to hell if they do not receive the remission of sins. Knowing full well that they are going to hell, how could we stay still?

We, too, were sinners before we were born again. But we met the Lord, our sins disappeared, and we became people with clean hearts. We were reconciled with God. Having been reconciled, we now do the work of reconciling people with God. That is how we are serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Lord says that such people are blessed. We do this work because we pity people. We do it gladly. Neither you nor I do it because we are enslaved to the work. If it were about publishing books, we could print just a few and be done, and we receive no money for them. Yet we must keep supplying them without

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ceasing. It is because there are still many souls dying, deceived by religion.

Religion passes sin down even to the next generation

These days, when you watch Christian broadcasts, they say, let us pray for the coming generation. They pray, give offerings, and preach the word for the next generation. People who lead religious lives say they are doing it for the next generation.

Grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers and mothers devote themselves to religion and believe zealously. But they are sinners before they believe and sinners after they believe. They carry on zealously like that, and when they die, they go to the place they must go. And yet they tell the next generation, follow us.

Seeing this is truly heartbreaking. They themselves are all dying, deceived by religion. They are not loved before God; rather, they stand in the position of opposing God. And yet they try to pass that down to their grandsons and granddaughters.

No one is saved by the Law

Religion is originally something man has made. When people first fall into it, it seems very good. When they hear that Jesus died on the Cross for them, they are moved at first. They are so thankful for Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross. So at first it is good. But after a little time passes, they fail to keep the Law and end up great sinners.

Jesus did not demand it that way. Jesus taught us that the Law

is what makes us realize our sin. He said, you are sinners who cannot keep the Law. But when people fall into religion, they are told they must keep the Law. Failing to keep the Law, they become sinners. Once they become sinners, sin begins to pile up. If that sin is not removed, it is hell.

To borrow someone's words, it is very good at first, but as time goes by it becomes like a living hell. It is so hard. But God did not do it by the Law. He said, I will send My Son to you and save you. He said, if you believe in the baptism My Son received from John and in the work of the Cross when He comes to this earth, you will receive the remission of sins. He said, I will save you. Yet people do not realize this and strive to keep the Law. But no man can keep the law of God.

The law of God must be kept one hundred percent. But if you keep it and then break one part, everything becomes void. Even if you keep the Law well and then break just one thing, all you have kept until then becomes void. For where sin has come, there is judgment. To pronounce judgment there must be a law. There is the law we must keep in our conduct—the Law. Since we have failed to keep that law, judgment inevitably follows. Therefore the Scriptures say:

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Once people fall into religion, they stay in it and die in it. Not content with that, they try to pass it on to their children and to their grandsons and granddaughters. In this age, whether one believes in Jesus or believes in another religion, being saved by works makes no sense. As long as one does not realize the truth of being born again, it is all an attempt to obtain salvation by works. People try to believe in Jesus, do good works, be changed, and so obtain salvation. But trying to do so is truly a vain thing.

How developed are media like the Internet and YouTube

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these days? How many things are contained in them? One cannot avoid seeing them. Yet a person who has not received the remission of sins cannot carry on a life of faith once he sees them. The person who has received the remission of sins knows that human beings are like that by nature, and so he overcomes with room to spare. People say they receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance, but that is nothing more than turning from one single sin. Yet the sins that come in through the eyes and ears are not just one. Ten, twenty, a hundred kinds come into the heart, the thoughts, and the actions.

How could anyone keep all this and be saved? If people open their eyes wide and consider, and open their ears and listen, they come to know that it cannot be done this way. No one can be saved by keeping the Law. We are saved only by faith.

Then what faith is it? It is faith in the saving work, the gospel of the water and the Spirit: God sent His Son to this earth, had Him baptized by John to take on our sins, and had Him nailed to the Cross, shedding His blood and receiving judgment for us, to remove our sins. By that faith we receive the remission of sins. By the merit of the Son we receive the remission of sins.

And yet people still say, let us pray for the next generation. For whom? For their own children and their grandsons and granddaughters. They, too, will keep the Law and become sinners; they will say they have been saved by believing in Jesus, but afterward they will become sinners in their hearts. Because of that sin they will suffer until they die, and in the end they are being led to live without ever receiving the remission of sins. How wrong this is!

It cannot be that because the parents ate sour grapes, the children’s teeth are set on edge. The Lord says so. They themselves became sinners because they failed to believe in Jesus Christ and did not know the truth. They became sinners by

inheriting the sin of Adam and Eve. Then to the next generation they ought to hand down this truth. But failing to hand it down, they make even their descendants sinners.

Those who gain profit within religion are a very small minority. The leaders gain benefit. With it they eat well and live well, are exalted, and enjoy wealth and glory. But the rest of the believers face senseless death. How pitiful these people are, for they go to hell! They are people who believe in religion and then go to hell.

Not religion, but faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Some call religion opium. Once a person falls into religion, it is hard to get out of it. When someone takes a shot of drugs, at first it feels wonderful. But he remembers it and takes another, and keeps taking it. At first it feels good, but later he sees evil spirits and terrifying things. He comes to feel in his body exactly what he imagines. Religion is like this. Believing in religion brings a curse instead.

But ours is not religion. Ours is faith. It is looking up at what God has done and believing it with the heart. God sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took our sins upon Himself. Bearing the sin of the world, He went and was nailed to the Cross and fulfilled the work of sacrifice. He died and rose again and became our Savior. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We look upon this work done for us and obtain salvation by believing. This is not religion. Religion is what man has thought up and made for himself.

Therefore the lives of those who have fallen into religion are

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wretched. They demand of others what they themselves cannot keep. Having fallen into the wrong place and ended up bound for hell, they say, how can I go alone—come with me.

Ask a person who believes in Jesus: are you happy believing in Jesus? Among those who have not been born again, there is no one happy. Their hearts are like a living hell. Since they are told that Jesus is the Creator and the Savior and that He died on the Cross, they can neither disbelieve nor cast it away. Then why do they evangelize? Because doing so makes their hearts a little glad and wins them recognition. But inside it is a living hell. Is there anyone here who has lived a religious life? Those who have will have felt that living hell of the heart.

Because the Holy Spirit is in us, we show mercy

But we met the Lord and received salvation. Because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, we have mercy on people. We pity them. There is nothing to say about anyone being better or worse. They have sin and are bound for hell—bound in the end for the burning hell—so what is there to be proud of? No one knows when he will go. That is why we pity them.

Such people are blessed. Such people obtain mercy. We have received the remission of sins, but how many shortcomings we still have! Yet God looks at our faith and has made us His children and His people. He gives us the blessings He promised. That is the merciful love of God. God does not look at our deeds. Only, the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts and leads us rightly.

The pure in heart see God

He said, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8)*. It means that the person whose heart is clean sees God. Such a person is blessed. Who is the pure in heart? The born-again. The born-again are clean in heart. They have no sin. Even if they have done wrong, all those sins have already been passed on to Jesus. So they turn back again and live with clean hearts. Since living by the flesh keeps leading us to wrong places, we resolve not to live that way any longer.

We determine that, however lacking we are, we will do every day what pleases God. Otherwise the flesh keeps falling into wrong places. So we keep creating things to do that please God. We create work for preaching the gospel; we make literature; we make booklets. We do typing, make audio, and make combined volumes, videos, and advertisements. We give ourselves to such work.

When we do, the Holy Spirit within rejoices. If we do not do the work of God, the desires of the flesh rise up. Then we end up going after the lusts of the flesh. Then we do worse things than those who are not born again.

Therefore the Lord said, *"'You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Matthew 5:13)*. If a person who has received the remission of sins, who believes this gospel, hates serving the gospel and goes out to live in the world, he lives far more wickedly than the people of the world. It is because he has no sin. Then even the people of the world dislike him and avoid him.

Such a person becomes useless in the world and useless in the kingdom of God. Such a person is called wicked. Therefore we must receive the guidance of the Spirit. We must hold on to

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the word and follow it. If we cannot do it alone, we can join our hearts to the work the church is doing. Then this body is less used for sin and more used for God. We become instruments of God.

He said, *"Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8)*. In fact, it is not seeing God with the eyes. If we receive the remission of sins, follow God, and live before God, we come to see with the heart what kind of God He is. We do not see Him as a form; with the heart we see it all. We come to know the heart of God—what He likes, what He loves, and what He hates. We become such people. Such people are blessed.

The peacemakers are called sons of God

He said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9)*.

The peacemakers are blessed. It is because they make people at peace with God. They teach a person his sin. They tell him why he is a sinner, why he does wrong, and from whom he inherited sin. And they tell him how God sent His own Son and saved him.

Man fell for the Devil's enticement and took the Devil's side. So he became an enemy of God. Sinners are enemies of God. But we preach the gospel and reconcile them with God. The peacemaker is like Elijah. Elijah played the mediator's role of turning the heart of the father to the child and the heart of the child to God. John the Baptist baptized Jesus and passed our sins on to Him. Jesus took over the sins of mankind. And in the place of sinners He was nailed to the Cross, died, and rose again, becoming our Savior. Through the preaching of this gospel of the water and the Spirit, sinners are reconciled with God, receive

salvation, and become children of God. Those who do this work are the ones called sons of God.

We carry out this work for dying souls

We are doing this work now. It is truly hard. It is good that so much of the work done by our hands keeps pouring in, but we are terribly busy—designing, printing out, and printing, working until late at night and shipping.

Still, for the work of making peace and the work of showing mercy, we keep on doing this work. To put it simply, it is living for others. It would be comfortable to live only for ourselves, but there are so many people dying. Because God has entrusted this work to us, we set up a system and work. But our strength runs short. It is so hard.

Even so, we must do the work of God. We must do it until the day the Lord comes, until the day we go before the Lord. Such people are blessed. What kind of person is blessed? Such a person is blessed. To whom were these words spoken? He is saying that when the righteous serve according to the Lord's will, they are blessed.

Then what recompense do they finally receive? In the kingdom of God, we receive recompense for what we have done on this earth. When is that fulfilled concretely? It is fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom. The everlasting kingdom of heaven and the Millennial Kingdom are like one, but the Scriptures speak of the two separately. Like the man who received authority over ten cities, the disciples of Jesus will sit on thrones and reign together with the Lord. Because God is just, He does such things.

We do not do it looking for that. If we could, we would rather not do it. But because God pitied us and saved us, we also pity

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them. It is not of ourselves; we pity them because of the Holy Spirit who is within us.

They are pitiful people. They put on airs, act as if they were great and rich, and swagger. But look inside, and their households are full of things distressing, irritating, and accursed. And still they put on airs. That is why they are pitiful. Looking at their end, they are pitiful. Looking at the present, they live better than we do and have more money. But looking at their end, they are pitiful people.

That is why we do literature ministry to deliver the gospel to them. What is fortunate is the fact that when we make a booklet and give someone a copy, he reads it and receives the remission of sins. If we go and speak in person, hours are not enough. It might take a whole month. For someone with many thoughts, it might take a year. So, since God knows well and we know well, we stand in between, make the literature, and deliver it. We hand it to them, asking them to read it once.

A person reads it for himself and judges for himself. So people overseas tell us how wonderful it is and send their thanks. But in truth it is not I who did it. My own state when God met me, and the righteousness of God—how God saved me—that is what I, like Elijah, merely deliver from the middle. I tell them that as God met me like this, He will meet you like this as well. So people praise me, but they also praise the fellow workers who labor together. And they praise God, who had such books written. In that way we do the work of giving glory to God.

This is not something that happens because one wants to do it. Had I not met the Lord, I could never have done it. Since meeting you, I have told the same story for more than thirty years. I have told it elsewhere as well. Even if I were to live two hundred or three hundred more years, I would continue. It is because God pitied us, loved us, and saved us, and that love is

so great. So however much I speak of it, it is not enough; speak of it again, and it is still not enough. There is no feeling now of not wanting to tell it again or of being tired of it. Tell it, and it is new; tell it again, and it is new again. It is so good. The hearer is glad and the speaker is glad. That is why we do it. Had we not been born again, we could never do it.

I realized the baptism Jesus received from John and became a witness of the gospel

I met the Lord personally through this word. If I had come to know it by learning it from someone, I could not have done this. Even while believing in Jesus, I suffered terribly because of sin. As I said before, it was like hell. I could neither disbelieve nor cast it away. But since I had sin, the demon came and accused me: you sinned, didn't you—you sinned! It kept tattling on me. A voice came to my ears saying that if I was going to suffer like that, it would be better to die.

So I said this: everything you say is right. I am sick of it. But before that, let us settle the account. Satan the Devil, what you say is all true. It is not wrong. But why do you pick a quarrel with me? Even when I sinned, I sinned against God, not against you. Are you God? You are not the one to rule over me and govern me. In the name of Jesus Christ I command you, Satan the Devil, be gone. You useless Satan the Devil, how dare you raise a fuss at me about this and that? Three times I command you in the name of the Lord Jesus: Satan the Devil, be gone. I cried out like this three times.

But the demon pressed down hard on my head and crushed my shoulders. When a demon takes hold of you, it is terribly heavy. It is as heavy as if a sack of cement were laid on your

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shoulders. It is unbearable. That is what demons do when you do not listen to them.

So I went before the Lord. I prayed and prayed: I seem to know Your word, but in reality I do not; teach me what this word means. Then one day I was looking at the Scriptures. I had read the Bible so much that I had it all threaded through my mind. What promises were made in the Old Testament, how they were fulfilled in the New Testament to bring salvation, and what He would do in the world to come—the whole Bible had entered my heart. Yet there was one question I could not grasp no matter how I looked. It was why Jesus received baptism from John. That part had always been a question, and while reading that part, my heart was opened.

At the words *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15),* it was as if a light were switched on in my head. 'Ah, the representative of mankind is John the Baptist.' It is so, for He said that among those born of women there is none greater. And I realized that this man was the Elijah who was to come. The prophet Malachi said that before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD, God would send Elijah the prophet, and that those who did not listen to him would be struck with destruction.

He was John the Baptist. John the Baptist baptized Jesus and passed on to Him the sins of mankind. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took over all the sins of mankind once and for all. He went down into the water once and came up out of the water. Ah, Jesus took over all sins. Baptism means washing—then how does it wash sin away? By raising up one representative to baptize Jesus and so pass the sin of the world on to Him. Ah, this is how the Lord saved me. Then my sins were passed on. If it is the sin of the world, then my sins, too, were passed on. Theology divides it into original sin and actual

sins, but taken together it is the sin of the world.

It is written, *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:16–17).* So the Son of God came to this earth and ended the sins of everyone in this world. Now it is finished. The Lord has saved me. I, a sinner who inherited sin through Adam and through my parents and who also committed many sins—the Lord saved me like this. He has made me a child of God without sin.

I was so thankful. The word was so clear, yet lest I had realized it wrongly, I looked it up in a dictionary. Looking it up in a Greek dictionary, 'thus (οὕτως)' meant in this way—that it could not be otherwise than by this method. It meant that by this method—the baptism Jesus received from John—Jesus took over the sin of the world and made all people sinless. It meant He saved us from sin. Even after confirming that, wondering whether I might still be missing something, I searched through the books to see how the excellent men before me had interpreted this passage. I looked at what they said about the passage where Jesus was baptized. But coming to this part, people call it a difficult passage, or say that Jesus was baptized out of humility. They say He meant to show an example of humility. Then are these people not reading the word?

So I met people and asked. Professor, Doctor, I have a question; please hear it and answer me. When I asked like this, they did not even know the meaning of the original word and said only irrelevant things. This is an easy question: if baptism washes away sin, why did the sinless Jesus receive baptism? Yet grab hold of a hundred people and ask, and all hundred only

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answered, “Where is there a person without sin?” I was so lonely.

But from then on I could not stay still. My heart was full. In the old days I had been bound by sin and suffered, But now I had been set free from sin, and I was overjoyed. So I could not help telling others. Just as the word says, *“But 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)*, my mouth was opened. So whenever I met someone, I would tell the story. When I preached the gospel, that person received the remission of sins and became like me. The people I met grew many, and everyone I met was changed.

I studied theology, but after being born again I did not want to become a pastor. I thought I would rather earn money and give support so that the gospel could be served abundantly. In the old days, to prepare one sermon I had to read so many books and patch pieces together, and it was hard. But now I no longer needed to do that. I began to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in my sermons. People received salvation, and once they were saved, they asked again. They said, it is good to have received the remission of sins, but what happens if we sin again afterward? Then I had to tell them that part as well. And they said it was good to have even that part resolved. Doing so, I have come to stand before you today.

I pray that the Lord will keep us this year as well. We give thanks before the Lord. We thank Him for making us blessed people. Is it not truly amazing that we have become blessed people? By what means could we ever become blessed? It is only the grace of the Lord. With this I close the message. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

In the last days we must live for the preaching of the gospel

< Matthew 5:10-15 >

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ‘Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. ‘You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. ‘You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.”

The passage we have read together today is the Sermon on the Mount, which Jesus spoke after going up on a mountain with His disciples. These words concern the eight blessings, the Beatitudes. Jesus clearly taught to whom God gives blessings and what those blessings are. Today, through these words, we want to consider together what we must live for in the last days.

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The gospel is preached free of charge

It seems there would be many websites in Christianity around the world that give out books preaching the gospel free of charge, but when you actually search, there are none—which is truly strange. Is not preaching the gospel something done free of charge? Do we preach the gospel for money? The gospel is preached free of charge. Yet even searching the whole world, there are almost no such sites.

So we intend to open a separate free Christian website. We will pay the costs of building the website. We will set up its framework, look into all the administrative matters, and, if possible, pay all its expenses.

If we build it so that people can receive free books, and they come to know that they can download anything on this site free of charge, many people will come. Then the gospel of the water and the Spirit will be spread throughout the whole world. We are not earning money through this. We only want to preach the gospel. Therefore we must take up the challenge and create this work.

If we fail, we can simply try again. Everything we have done until now was achieved by taking up challenges like this. I told one sister, as we once built our website in the old days, that we would pay the costs and look into all the administrative matters, so she should find people and build it. We must also look at how others have done it. We should find out whether such websites exist within Christianity, benchmark what is worth benchmarking, and make this gospel spread to the whole world.

The world is now becoming harder and harder. The economy is shaking, prices are rising steeply, and a time will come when food becomes scarce. We are people who discern such times more keenly than the people of the world and prepare in advance.

But the ultimate purpose of our preparing is one thing only: to preach this gospel to the end.

Those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed

In the passage, Jesus spoke like this: *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:10–12).*

That is, the words mean that the person who is reviled and persecuted because he preaches the gospel is blessed. People think that eating well, living well, and being comfortable are blessings. But those are only blessings of the flesh. Spiritual blessings are different.

Then Jesus went on to say, *"'You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. 'You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:13–14).*

Salt, light, and the lamp all convey the same message here. These words were spoken to us, who have received the remission of sins. Then are we really those who are persecuted for righteousness? We must examine ourselves about this.

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Even as we age, there is no need for our hearts to shrivel as well

First, we must think about whether we are fulfilling our role as the salt of the earth. When we live on this earth and grow old—sixty, sixty-five—the body is not what it used to be, and the heart keeps shriveling. Can I do this work? It is so different from the way I used to do it—with such thoughts the heart shrinks back.

But the Lord said that those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed. If we are doing the work that pleases God and living for God, being old or young is not the issue. The old have much wisdom; the young have less wisdom but much strength. Either way, what matters is whether we live being persecuted for righteousness—for what is right, for God, for the preaching of God's gospel. It is whether we live with that spirit.

That is how we ought to live. But if, because we have grown old, we neglect the work of God and draw our bodies back, caring only for our own flesh in our last years and trying to live only for ourselves, the heart shrivels, the body aches more, and everything becomes harder.

Whether you are old or not, the person who has received the remission of sins must ask: is the work I am doing now work for God? Is it labor for righteousness? Or am I doing it for myself? We must always think about this. If we live for God, then even though the body is not what it once was, there is no need for the heart to shrivel as well.

Even if we cannot run and jump and climb to high places, there is plenty of work we can do sitting down, step by step. We can use our heads and work wisely. Leave the hard work to the young, and let the older ones do the work they can bear. If we do, we can still reap an abundant harvest.

During the Covid period we could not gather together, but at such times we must divide the work wisely. Great tasks are hard for one church to bear, so several local churches join strength to bear them, and small tasks each one bears in his own place. Whatever the work, we must not do it grudgingly as if at a job, but bear it with all our hearts for the Lord.

There are brothers who labor late into the night. One brother stays preparing until midnight after everyone else has gone in. I, too, work until midnight, and sometimes until two or three in the morning. That we labor like this for righteousness and go through hardship is rather a happy thing. The Lord said that the one who lives like this for Him is blessed.

Hardship follows if we are to be salt and light

If we are going to be salt and light, hardship follows. Then should we not do it because it is hard? Should we quit because it is hard? If we hold such a heart, even living on this earth becomes destitute. If, for the Lord, we do this work and that work even beyond our strength, things come to us as well, God gives blessings, and we even become able to give to others.

Making this recent booklet, I had a very hard and difficult time. Just preaching the gospel is hard enough, but trying to do this work for the two billion Catholics, the spiritual burden was truly great. I thought much about it. But this is work that pleases the Lord, and it is work worth doing.

If we the righteous do not do this work, who will? The Lord has already given us the strength to do it and has blessed us. What is there we cannot do? We can do it. Serving the Lord is nothing special. It is making booklets as the Lord pleases, posting them on the Internet, and letting people see them,

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download them, and read them. If someone persecutes us after reading, persecuting is their part; my part is to preach this gospel.

The wrong of deleting the baptism Jesus received from John

They confess together the Nicene Creed, the Apostles' Creed, and the Trinity, yet they have deleted the very work by which Jesus washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And they say they did not put such a thing in. But this must surely be put into the Nicene Creed, and it must be believed. If one does not believe this, where is the effect of believing in Jesus?

Have sins disappeared by believing only in Jesus nailed to the Cross? Is it not because sins do not disappear that they made the seven sacraments and say people must do confession, offer prayers of repentance, and achieve sanctification? Did they not try to replace the problem of sin with man-made theological doctrines? And after doing so, what remains today? Does not sin remain? From pastors to the pope and the priests, all who believe in Jesus have ended up sinners.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished

How did it come to this? Because they deleted the work of the baptism Jesus received from John. In fact, Jesus came to this earth as the Savior. He came, and in the year He turned thirty, He was baptized by John the Baptist, took upon Himself all the sins of the world, and washed them away.

Since Jesus received baptism and took over all our sins, sin is now not with us but with Jesus. So Jesus shouldered our sins and went to the Cross. He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again on the third day, completing the work of saving us. That is why, dying nailed to the Cross, He said, “It is finished,” and breathed His last. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

As Jesus suffered to save us, so we who believe also suffer for the Lord’s gospel.

The foolishness of living looking only at today

Yet people say, with human thinking, that one should enjoy the world while living. Some say that in the old days people saved the money they earned, but these days they spend it all. They travel abroad, do this and that, and end up penniless. When hard times come upon the world, such people cannot endure. Those who have not prepared for the future fall into despair.

What finally became of the countries that lived by earning all year and spending it all on vacation? Even nations called advanced lived with that way of thinking and fell into hardship. A person who lives like that does not collapse alone; he brings down his family as well.

He said that those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed. It is right to live giving our spirit, heart, and body for what is right. If one squanders everything, saying, I have no future, there is no tomorrow, there is only today, and spends it all today, what will he do tomorrow? Is that not truly wretched?

There was a man who was caught stealing food from a convenience store because he was hungry. He said he had not eaten for three days. On the other hand, there was a man who,

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though he had a large sum in his bank account, harmed his family and took his own life because his business was not going well. Why do such things happen? Because the way of thinking is wrong.

As with the twelve ships, we take up the challenge for the gospel

Long ago there was Admiral Yi Sun-sin. In a situation where those who went before him had fought the enemy and lost almost all the ships, he became the commander guarding the sea. He went to the king and reported that he still had twelve ships left. And he asked to be sent as commander of the navy, saying that he would use those twelve ships as the foundation for rebuilding the navy and fighting the enemy.

He went down, gathered shipbuilders and built ships, drew up strategies, and studied. He grasped when the tide went out and came in and where the whirlpools swirled. So when the enemy's thousands of ships attacked, he sailed out with a very small number of ships, lured the enemy to where the water swirled, and won a great victory. In the end the enemy could not seize the country by sea and turned back.

We must always ask: how shall we spread this gospel? How can it be spread? If there is even a little possibility, we must take up the challenge. I do the work of making literature not because I am good at it. I do it because doing so spreads the gospel.

If I must become an expert in this work, then I become an expert. If I do not know, I learn and do it. Where is there anyone who does everything well from the start? So it was with our work of translating the books. How much trouble and hardship we went through because of translators!

One translator quit this work once his circumstances became comfortable. So, hearing that artificial intelligence could now translate, we bought a program and had translation attempted. At first it did not go well and was clumsy, but now it does better than professional translators. Because we tried to do it for righteousness, for what is right, it has turned out this way. The various works we are doing now are all for the gospel.

With that spirit, faith, and heart, asking the Lord for help, challenging by faith, and going forward for the gospel even in our insufficiency—will not the Lord help us? I have believed so and have come this far.

I am telling you to do the same. He said that those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed; now you must not sink down, returning to the thoughts of the flesh because you have grown old, saying, what could I do? Even now, when I have nothing else to do, I go out to the work site. There is not only work done up high. There is much work done down low. What matters is trying to do something.

It is good to change your methods to take care of your body as you age. We even give support for that. Only, the spirit must be for the gospel. Though with age you cannot work in the old way, you can now use your head and work in a different way, moving a little and reaping much fruit. You can do plenty.

We are the light of the world

We are the light of the world. If we do not shine the light, people do not know what light is. We must shine the light for them. The reason a person lights a lamp and sets it high on a lampstand instead of putting it beneath the lamp is so that its light may shine on everyone.

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We light it not in a basement but in a high place. Even a fluorescent lamp must be lit not on the floor but up high for the space below to be brightly lit. Our preaching of the gospel is done in the same way. When we do this through our website, through various advertisements, and through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, people come to know and believe.

The blood of the Cross alone does not wash away sin

Christians all over the world collapsed because of the Nicene Creed. Believing only in the blood of the Cross, sins do not disappear. Believing only in the blood of the Cross, one cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Believing only in the gospel of the Cross, one ends up a religionist. If people believe only in the gospel of the Cross, the religious leaders all end up false.

It was not on the Cross that our sins were taken on. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He took on our sins and washed our sins away. Then why do people keep speaking only of the gospel of the Cross? The Cross is the conclusion of that gospel. Jesus Himself said that one must be born again of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said, *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)*. The truth here is that Jesus saved us through the baptism He received and the blood of the Cross. Only when we know the truth can we deliver it. But when people preach with what is not the truth—a half gospel, something like a worldly religion—how can church members receive the remission of sins? The preacher himself has never received the remission of sins. To believe Christianity, you must know for certain what the Scriptures say and believe. If Jesus said that one

must be born again of water and the Spirit, you must know what the gospel of the water and the Spirit is.

Then we must seek and ask. Jesus said, *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).* We must take up the challenge. It is not even in the Scriptures, yet they say that believing only in the blood of the Cross brings the remission of sins. How could anyone receive the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross?

When people think only of the Cross, they recall that He shed His blood and died for them, and they become overwhelmed with human emotion. What a grateful One He is; He was sacrificed for me; I am so thankful; I believe; I will live for the Lord—so they resolve.

So some even volunteer and go out as missionaries. They go to the mission field, preach the gospel of the Cross, and cry out for people to believe in Jesus. But in their own hearts there is no joy. There is no food. The heart is empty and confused. Moreover, since they too have flesh, they sin. In the end, far from preaching the gospel to others, they come to the point of starving to death for lack of spiritual food. So they return and say that what is hard is not the suffering out there but not being able to eat the food of the spirit.

Then, when they return home, do they eat the food of the spirit? They still believe only in the blood of the Cross and do not know the truth. Living like that, they die with only the name and achievements of a missionary. If a missionary dies with sin, it is hell; if one lives as a pastor and dies with sin, it is hell; and though one gives everything with all one's life as a senior deaconess, a deacon, or a lay believer, if one has sin, it is hell.

Such a person has not met the Lord. The Lord will say, *"Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew*

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7:23). If this is not lawlessness, what is? The Lord made us born again of water and the Spirit. Yet they say they have received the remission of sins by believing not in the gospel of the water and the Spirit but only in the Cross—is that not their own thinking? Is it not a salvation they have made up for themselves? Is it not a man-made doctrine of salvation, a theological doctrine? That is why He says, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.

The Lord says this: I have never raised a sinner as a sinner. I became the God of sinners to save them; I am not a God who accepts sinners as they are and lets them enter heaven. This is what God does. Then how wrong today's Christianity is! For the past one thousand seven hundred years it has come to this.

Catholicism made a syncretic religion so that they themselves could eat well and live well. Calling themselves the most universal church, they publicly declared that they do not believe in the baptism of Jesus. They believe in Jesus, but regard Him as one among the many gods of the world; they said they accept Buddhism and accept Islam, mixing this and that together in their belief. And yet the people of the world and those who believe in Jesus look up to them, respect them, and exalt them. Politicians bow before them, and Christians follow right after them.

So Christians say with their lips that they do not serve idols, yet in reality they neither believe nor know the fact that Jesus received baptism and was nailed to the Cross to remove our sins. And still they want to believe in Jesus and go to heaven. When people first believe in Jesus, for a year or two they are so joyful their feet hardly touch the ground. Just thinking of Jesus nailed to the Cross brings tears. When the blood of the Lord's Cross and His love are preached from the pulpit, even a single sentence of that sermon brings tears. It is because, as fellow human beings,

sympathy for His suffering rises and they are deeply moved.

Going on like that, after about five years, each time they sin they at first think of the Cross, offer prayers of repentance, and cling to Him weeping. But after weeping a year, two years, five years, the tears dry up and the feelings dry up. Then they become sorry toward Jesus. Every day they sin, every day they beg forgiveness, every day they think of the blood of the Cross. The Lord died for me, and I have sinned again, they say, and their conscience becomes unbearably tormented. It becomes a wound. The wound of one who has sinned is the deepest wound. If it is not resolved, it remains a wound and drives a person to death.

After five or ten years, they end up hypocritical Christians. They come to church and first offer prayers of repentance, greet one another and shake hands, do a good deed now and then, hold bazaars, and gather old clothes to help the poor. They sell a hundred-thousand-won garment for a thousand won and feel warm inside. But how far can that go? In the world there are many who do better than Christians. One must not make such things one's own righteousness. To give to those truly in need, to the person who really needs it, without making a show, because of Jesus—that is a joyful thing. But if you give making a show of it, you have already received all your reward.

In the last days we must live being persecuted for righteousness. Because of Covid, for several years I could not meet the workers across the country. Having met people and then being unable to meet them was truly hard. So I thought about why God had allowed me this situation. I realized that the work of continually revising and reprinting the old books had reached saturation, and that not a single book was in a finished state. The thought came to me that God had given me time to set these documents in order.

So I made an inspection. The situation was beyond words.

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Agonizing over what to do, I had combined volumes made with English and Korean, English and French, English and German, English and Spanish side by side. But when I looked at what was brought to me, the lengths differed not just a little from language to language but enormously. I know neither Thai nor Spanish. But there is one thing I do know. I know where I put the Bible verses when I wrote the books and what punctuation I used. Yet in the combined volumes they were missing. At first I looked again, wondering if it was my own misunderstanding, but it was the same. Whether the problem lay in the source text itself or in the translation, the situation was truly serious.

Meanwhile, hearing that AI translators had come out, we translated anew with them and have come to this day. Even the people who made the AI say they did not know translation would advance this quickly. They thought it would be possible only twenty years later, but the technology developed on its own, and they say even they do not quite understand it. Is this not for us? Those who labored in the old days were even hurt, asking whether what they had done was in vain. But it is not so. What they did was precious according to their labor; only, the work itself was left unfinished, and by that method people could not receive the remission of sins.

In fact, among those who believed through the gospel preached in the old way, many have now disappeared. When we gave the newly AI-translated book to those who had believed in the old days, they asked whether this book was that old book. When we said it was the same book with the same content, before we knew it, they had vanished. That is how much was wrong in the old translations.

How fortunate, then, that we were able to set the documents in order like this during the Covid period. Was that not labor for the Lord then, and is this not labor now for the Lord's

righteousness, for what is right? It is said that all things work together for good, and it has truly turned out well. There were shortcomings and there were hardships, but we did not give up because the work was hard. Even if we know nothing, if only we have a heart for the Lord, we will go forward step by step and accomplish the Lord's will in the end. As the Lord said, "It is finished," so we, too, will finish preaching this gospel on this earth. The Lord grants our desires and helps us.

In the last days we must live for the preaching of the gospel

We are living now in such a situation. Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we do it for the preaching of the gospel. We light the lamp and put it not under the lampstand but on the lampstand. We must keep our spirits alert. Our spirit must not grow slack. Work looks the same every day, like a squirrel turning its wheel, but we must always renew our hearts and go forward today also for the Lord. Every single thing we do now, even one bending of the back, is for the Lord. We must do it with that spirit, and so we must live.

Great economic hardship may strike our country again. The value of assets may fall steeply and crash. Even if such a time comes, we do this work. Why? Because the Lord said, you are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salt means the one who possesses the truth. What does not decay is the truth. What we believe is what does not decay. When we deliver it, those who did not know discover the truth, believe, and become the light of the world. What we are doing is a truly precious work, and since the world is heading toward its end, we must stay awake.

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When the world was in such difficulty, in the time of Covid, what did we have to do? I may have looked like a man ignoring the churches across the country, but I spent a great cost just providing masks, and I also supplied the nationwide churches with things like mask-making machines. That is proof that I never turned away from the churches across the country. My being careful with my body was not out of fear. I was concerned that if I fell ill I could not do my work, that I and the church family would collapse, and that this place would become a place unable to preach the gospel. I was careful so that, to the end of the age, as long as I live, I might supply and keep you, serve the gospel together with you, and keep us from falling ill.

Some drew back, trying to save only themselves. But we are people who must meet the people of the world. As time has passed, it has turned out that not rashly following what was unverified was the right thing after all. One brother, after being vaccinated several times, developed side effects and says he can no longer taste his food. That is being alive without truly living. Guarding one's own body while thinking only of one's own difficulties is not the answer; we must hear what the Holy Spirit says to the churches.

The church is governed by God. Therefore we must hear what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. We must not think only of our own difficulties. If we run forward for the Lord, the Lord fills our needs. But if we shrink back for ourselves, we lose even what we have. That is what happens when we live not for God but for ourselves. That is why the Lord said, seek first His righteousness, and blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness. We must not stop at knowing the word of God. We must apply it in our lives and live by faith. And so we must bear fruit. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Do the Lord's work faithfully in the position entrusted to you

< Matthew 5:14-20 >

"'You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. 'Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

Today all our nationwide churches take part in the election. I hope the saints will each vote according to their own convictions. Whether you vote for the left or for the right does not matter. I only hope that the country will be stable, that the economy will rise, and that freedom of religion, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly will be kept.

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I do not lean toward politics. There are pastors who get deeply involved in politics, but I am a pastor, not a politician. I do not care which side takes power. It is enough for us to serve the gospel well and for the country to be at peace. Whoever becomes president, I only pray to God that he will lead the country well. I am on God's side, on Christ's side.

Then how should we live? Through today's passage, we want to look together at how we must faithfully carry out the Lord's work in the position we have each been given.

"You are the light of the world"

In verse 14 of today's passage, the Lord says that we are the light of the world. Just as a city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden, a person does not light a lamp and put it under a basket, but sets it on a lampstand. Thus its light shines on everyone in the house.

And in verse 16 He says: *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16)* These words are all spoken about us.

We are the very light of the world and the lamp of the world. Therefore, even if we try to hide, we cannot hide. This gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe can never be concealed. So we must preach this gospel to people and shine the light on them. Thus we must make people see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. This is the main point of these words.

Preaching the gospel is a good work

The Lord told us to let people see our good works and glorify

God, and the Scriptures say that our preaching the gospel is precisely a good work. We are doing a good work right now. To have people receive the remission of sins and to deliver the content of this gospel fully to one person, we must teach and preach what they do not know. But that is by no means an easy thing.

So we make this gospel into literature, make it into books, and deliver it. The person who receives the book comes to meet God while reading it through on his own. It is because the word itself testifies of God. So literature ministry is precious beyond telling. The Lord, too, made this thick word into a book and gave it to us. Through this word we meet the Lord, and preaching the gospel like this is itself a good work.

The Tabernacle shows the basis of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

These days we are revising and editing the books on the Tabernacle and publishing them anew. Those who take charge of this work will come to know. The Tabernacle is a blueprint that draws out how God would save people fallen in sin. The materials used in the Tabernacle all record the things necessary for the remission of our sins.

Therefore, if we learn the Tabernacle, we can know that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word of salvation with a firm basis. Our salvation has a clear basis. The coverings of the pillars of the Tabernacle were of silver, the cords were cords of bronze, **the pegs were driven in of bronze**, and the sockets of the pillars were of bronze.

In the Scriptures, iron means judgment. Silver means the grace of God, that is, the gift of salvation, and gold means faith.

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Numbers also have meanings. The number 4 signifies hardship and suffering. The four men who carried the paralytic to Jesus and Jesus' fasting forty days are all connected with this. The number 7 means the perfect number, the number 6 means man, and the number 5 means the grace of God. All these are connected with one another, as in finding hidden pictures.

When we read the whole Bible, we come to realize: ah, this is what God is saying. The work we are doing, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, is precisely a good work. This is a work done for others. We have already received the remission of sins, and we are doing the work that pleases the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

The Holy Spirit tells us to do this work. We may think, how could we, when we can hardly make a living? But if we do this work first, God fills all our needs. As we do the work, we come to know that God is pleased. The work we are doing is truly a good work, a virtuous work. How good a work is it to shine light on the world so that people receive the remission of sins?

Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets

The work Jesus did in coming to this earth was to fulfill what was spoken in the Law and the Prophets. Jesus is not One who came to destroy them. The Lord speaks to us like this.

"'Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:17–18).

God first gave the Law and the commandments to people to show His majesty and to make man realize and know sin. Then,

now that we have met the Lord, may we abolish and discard that Law? No. If we look closely into the Law, it can be divided into two: love God, and love people.

It is not that a born-again person may now stop loving people, stop caring for them, and trample on them. We must love people too, look after them well, and stand up for them. Also, even though we have received salvation, we must follow God well.

But some people say, since we have received salvation, is the Law not unnecessary for us? However, the Law tells us what kind of Being God is. The words, you shall have no other gods before Me, and you shall not take the name of God in vain, tell us that God is the Absolute Being.

The Law speaks what is entirely right. God tells us to keep well the Sabbath He gave, and to keep well the fact that He saved us, neither losing it nor throwing it away. He also tells us to look after people well. Therefore we must not regard the Law as something unnecessary.

Some denominations tear away the whole Old Testament and believe with the New Testament alone, saying that Jesus came and fulfilled it all. But that is knowing only one thing and not the other. What was spoken in the Law and what was spoken in the Prophets all promised the work Jesus Christ would come and do, and Jesus Christ came and fulfilled all those words.

Therefore we must never do so. The Lord surely fulfilled the words He promised through Jesus, fulfills them by coming again, and fulfills them even after we enter the kingdom of heaven. That is how we must understand it.

In verse 19 He says like this: *"Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:19).*

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Here, He told us to love everyone according to the word, and how to carry out that love is the homework given to the people of faith. How do you carry out your ministry? We have received the remission of sins and are serving the gospel; how then should we serve this gospel? Have you ever pondered this deeply?

Then how should we treat people? The Scriptures tell us to keep every one of God's commandments, even the very least. But how to keep them is what matters. The Lord also said that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. The Scriptures ask us two things: will you serve God, or will you serve man?

Moses and Aaron, two positions of serving

We have been entrusted with the work of God. We have been entrusted with the good work of preaching the gospel to the whole world. To do this work we set a goal and work, but it is hard to do it while keeping the word of God perfectly. Of course that is how it ought to be done. But the reality is that man cannot do so.

In ministry, when you take on some work, you can work in one of two ways. For example, there are Moses and Aaron. What Moses does is to receive commands from God, deliver those commands just as they are, make people keep them, and punish them if they fail to keep them. That is Moses' work.

But if ministry is done only in that way, everyone dies. No one receives the remission of sins either. When we did wrong, we ought to have been judged and put to death because of it, but our Lord came and saved us. Then what does the Lord do?

Moses is the one who stands on God's side and delivers the

word according to God's will, and Aaron is the one who stands between man and God and brings both sides to an agreement. He is a mediator who conveys the father's heart to the child and the child's heart to the father. He is the one who stands in the middle, conveys God's will to the people and the people's will to the Father, and brings about an agreement.

When we minister, we do not minister only by the Law. If we do, no one receives salvation. God's command tells us to do so, but can you keep all of God's commandments, even the very least of them? No one can keep them all.

Be faithful in your position, doing as you are directed

Then, when we take on God's work, what must we accomplish? To preach the gospel to the whole world is God's command, the command we have received. In doing this work, how should we lead people?

For example, to preach the gospel to the whole world through literature, we must do the work of making documents, editing, revising, and sending out books. And for this work we must entrust each person with his own task. But sometimes we set a person to a task and he turns out not to be fit for it. Though we teach him to do it this way, he does it his own way, does not listen to the one over him who directs him, and keeps insisting on his own stubborn way.

If, after being directed and taught once or twice, he still keeps doing so, that person cannot be used in that position. Because of that one person, those who work with him suffer harm. A goal is set, and many people work toward that goal to accomplish it; if the work is not accomplished because he does not do as directed,

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we have no choice but to send that person to another department.

For example, let us say we are building a house. Think of each of you as the person in charge. Under the person in charge, many people are attached to the work. The person in charge draws up the plans and sets them forth: this is what we must do; this is our goal. He divides the work, saying, you do this and you do that, and lays it all down: do this in this way, be careful with that, and do not do such things. Yet the person does not listen.

Then we wait for him. We tell him, do not do it that way; doing so ruins the work; you must do it this way. Yet he keeps insisting on his own stubborn way, playing his own individual game and ignoring his co-workers. He ignores their words and ignores their deeds. Then we must take this person out of that department. It is because, on account of that one person, the work of the whole team is not accomplished.

When a basketball game is played, there are a head coach and coaches. The coaches and the players discuss together, study the opposing team, and draw up all the tactics to win that day's game. They must play as planned, communicating with one another. When someone gets the ball, how the others move must mesh with him. When this meshes and turns well, they score one goal after another and can win the game.

But suppose one player grabs the ball alone, drives it alone, and tries to score alone. Suppose he has that ability. Then what becomes of the rest of the players? However well he does alone, while he is doing so, the other team scores more points. As a result, they lose the game. When they unite together—each doing his part faithfully as far as it goes and passing the ball, and the next player passing it on again and scoring—time is shortened and more goals go in. Thus the game is won.

There must be communication with one another, and there must be order. When the head coach above tells the coach to do

this, the coach must do just so. Each must do his assigned work while uniting with and helping one another. If someone thrusts himself forward, saying, I will do it my way; you do not even know how to work; I will do as I please, the head coach has no choice but to pull that person out. He pulls him out, telling him to go elsewhere and get training and come back if he is to play as a team. This is truly important.

Soccer is the same. There are a head coach and coaches, and the midfield, the left and right flanks, the attack, and the defense are all laid out. The players must not deviate from what has been set, but pass the ball and score. If they do not do so, however good a player may be, the head coach pulls him out. One famous head coach excluded from training a player who kicked the ball well but kept trying to play only individually. Then he built up that player's stamina and made him blend and communicate with the team, and finally used him as a scorer. Only when we do as directed do results arise.

The work of being a flower calyx for the gospel is also precious

When the Lord uses us in the preaching of the gospel, whether each of us has ability or not—if we have ability, we must produce results in our assigned part, and when the whole is viewed, it must be team play. The person who does his assigned work faithfully and hands it over, and the person who receives it, adapts to it well, and works—such a person is an excellent person.

Our serving the gospel is exactly the same. Jesus is the Head Coach, and under Him He has set up coaches. We do the work of a flower calyx that supports the preaching of the gospel.

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Whatever work we do, we must set our priorities rightly, knowing what is most important.

For example, in preaching the gospel to the whole world, if our bodies fall ill, we cannot supply things for the work that supports the gospel. Therefore we must be thoroughly careful not to catch any disease. In the time of the pandemic, those who did not wear masks caught the disease and could even lose their lives from its aftereffects. Thanks to keeping quarantine thoroughly and being careful with one another, our family members have endured well until now. It is not that a person entrusted with the gospel before God has only to preach the gospel; there must be a flower calyx that supports that gospel.

If there is a flower, the jar that holds it is the flower calyx. Only when both the outer roses and the tender roses inside are held up so that they do not fall does the beautiful form of the roses appear. Only when the holder gathers them into one do they shine. If there is someone who preaches the gospel and does literature ministry, there must be a flower calyx that supports him. Just as the lampstand in the Tabernacle has its base, everything has its base. Without the base, it collapses. So there are those who preach directly through literature, and there are those who support them so that they can preach; the one who does this work is precious, and the one who does that work is precious.

We are the Lord's instruments, not the master

All these works are brought together into obeying the word of Jesus Christ, our Head Coach. Therefore, what is truly important is whether or not, in the position each has been given, one has done as the Head Coach said. We must not do as we

please. I, too, cannot do as I please. It has been over thirty years since I met the Lord and met you. Even now I preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What I regard as most important is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Think about it. Have you done well as the one over you directed? Have you never ruined a work by not doing as directed? The one over you gives orders: do this, and do not do that. You must keep that in mind and work accordingly; if you do it your own way and bring it to him, it comes back as a useless thing. It comes back not because he does not like it, but because it does not fit the work being done.

In serving the Lord, we are instruments, not the master. We are not the head coach. Among us there are those who trust in their own ability and think themselves great; such a person must not be in a place of team play. Such a person must go to a position with a superior right above him, follow that superior around, and do as he is told. A person who does not do as told, even after being given a few points of caution, is a person unfit for team play. Such a person must be picked out and sent to a department that suits him.

In every army there are elite units. Which units stand at the very front in our country? There are the reconnaissance units and various other elite units. In those units they lay down their lives to fulfill their assigned missions. But if a person who acts as he pleases is picked for an elite unit, he is eliminated in the course of training. If he does not do as directed, he may even lose his life. It is not that someone kills him; he dies by his own fault.

We must absolutely keep this in mind. Should we lead our life of faith according to our own thoughts and our own feelings? At all times we must keep the Lord's word in our hearts and preach this gospel. How should we do it? We must do it as has been set. We must always pray and think for it, and pour out all

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our strength to accomplish that goal. The person who tries to serve the Lord his own way, the person who boils over and tries to do everything by himself, the person who tries to work all alone, is not fit.

When Gideon fought a war against the enemy, his soldiers were very few. He took the soldiers to the stream and had them drink water; there were those who buried their heads and put their mouths to the water to drink, and about three hundred scooped up the water with their hands and drank while looking around in every direction. He sent home those who buried their heads and drank, and took only those who drank from their hands while keeping watch around them. They went with torches hidden inside pitchers; then suddenly they broke the pitchers, lifted the torches high, and shouted, and drove out the enemy. You must do as directed. Only when we do as directed do results arise.

Since the Lord said here that the one who keeps even one small commandment is right, keeping God's commands is right. But we cannot do everything well. When it has been set that in this field things must be done this way, then in that field we must do so.

And people say the leader pleases them or does not please them, but the leader is not a person set up to please you. The person raised up by God has only to act so as to please God's heart. It is by no means that he must act in some way to please your hearts. Nevertheless, since we are human, we bear with one another's weakness and frailty, but to accomplish the great purpose we must surely obey. This is important beyond telling.

As I have met the Lord and served and preached the gospel, being human, all kinds of thoughts come to my mind. These days I even think, could we not do better by using artificial intelligence? When I actually had it try, it answers as minutely

as someone who majored in theology, and even beyond that.

Without my touching anything, if I ask it to discuss some field in terms of Calvinist theological thought, it talks away fluently. If I tell it to discuss the same thing from Arminianism, or to write an essay just as the critical scholars say, it does exactly so. I am a person who has been through all such things, so if I wanted to string out strange talk before you with enormously difficult words and make your heads spin, I could do it as much as I pleased.

But I do not do so. Rather, I unravel it very simply and deliver it in a way that is easy to understand. Doing so is by no means an easy thing. Why do I do so? Because God told us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, not to preach some other gospel.

He did not speak of preaching only the Cross and becoming sanctified by offering prayers of repentance. He told us to love our neighbors, but to love them in the Lord. Even love, if done in one's own way, becomes a devil standing against God and becomes party-making. It is truly not an easy thing. It is hard even for a servant to follow his master's words; would it be easy for us to follow God's will?

So it does not work to do as one pleases. God has given you talents and gifts, and He commands the one over you: serve the gospel this way, and preach it this way. Then the person who received that command entrusts the work again to those under him. There are captains of thousands, captains of hundreds, captains of fifties, and captains of tens, and the work is entrusted downward from above. But what would happen if someone said, I need none of that; I will be a captain of a thousand? Has God set you up as a captain of a thousand? If He has not set you up as a captain of a thousand, you must find where your own place is. Whether it is a captain of ten or a captain of fifty, you must

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find your own place and go to it. That is truly important.

Only when we serve the gospel like that can we preach the gospel. We must surely keep this in mind. We display our talents in order to accomplish that command; God does not desire that we overflow beyond it.

Yet sometimes a hole is torn open in some department. Why is a hole torn open in that department? Rather than doing the work as well as possible, if they had kept in mind what they were told to be careful about, then even if such a thing burst open, it would have burst late. But it bursts early on—and then how much time is dragged out, and how much must be made up? Even in raising animals, they must not fall sick. In raising chickens, however good the feed you give, it is useless unless you control outsiders and remove the sources of disease. Only by doing so can this work be carried on for a long, long time.

If we are to preach the gospel, we must preach it just as the word of God says. But mobilizing all kinds of ways and means to do better, one ends up like the ordinary churches. Then it becomes serving man, not serving God. Such things are not good.

Let us follow the Lord in our daily lives with generous hearts

To lead a life of faith is to live looking up to God. In life there are those who do well and those who do wrong, and for some people we must wait. But the basic principle is this: since I have received salvation, I love the other person as the Lord loved me. If that person believes in God, he is one of God's people, so we must regard him so and treat him so. It is not right to hate someone because he does not please me and to like someone because he pleases me.

We must learn how to live as well. When something happens, we should think over what God would say to that brother or sister, and we too must conduct ourselves so. As we live, we may do well and we may also do wrong. Above all, we must follow God's command well, and we must also find our own place well and work in that place. We must neither go beyond one's assigned role out of excessive zeal nor lag too far behind.

In our daily lives we must love our neighbors as ourselves. We embrace them generously and bear with them, but if it seems that the work of God will suffer loss and go wrong, we decide boldly and send that person to another place. But unless it is so, we wait for him, thinking that through such a process he will learn much and come to see his own self.

If Jesus had not loved you and me, we would all have gone to hell. If, even after we received salvation, He had judged us according to our every wrong, what would have become of us? I do not drive people out on purpose. I only move their places. I may say, you should not stay in this position; go and work elsewhere—but I do not coerce or drive out a person so as to kill him.

Would not the Lord wait for us? It is only that, because someone plays too individually in this position, we say he must move to another place. Such things we do boldly. Yet in dealing with each person one by one—being generous and forbearing, teaching and guiding and waiting—all this piles up in how I treat you and how you also treat me. Without it, one cannot lead a married life, or a social life, or a life of faith.

In daily life we must have a heart like God's. We must have generous hearts. If God dealt with us only by the original principles, could we survive even a single day? God knows it all, and yet He tells us to look at the word and hold fast to the word. Since the Lord has loved us like this, we too must be generous

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and wait. You have truly much to learn from God. I also have an immense amount to learn. But what God says must not be done must not be done for me either.

Everything else may be allowed, but if God says this must not be done, I too am compelled to speak. I say, go and learn in some other place, not in this department; this department needs people who listen well. Why is that? It is because this place is the flower calyx that supports the working of the nationwide churches. This place is not where we do our own work. We are not receiving something now by working; we are supporting everything. Such work must be done clearly. Otherwise everything collapses.

I do not want to be involved in politics. Only, I do not like following communism. A leader must be for the people and for the country; I do not like a person who is not for the country but only for himself and only for his own party. So I only pray to God that whoever is elected will lead the country well. Whether you vote for the left or for the right, I do not care. I am on God's side, on Christ's side.

Be faithful in the position entrusted to you. Do not boil over and try to take charge of everything yourself. What is the work entrusted to you? Think of it, and be faithful in that place. Then everything will be accomplished according to order, and I believe the work of God will be accomplished well. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

A complete sinner becomes a completely righteous person through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Matthew 5:21-30 >

"'You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny. 'You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is

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more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell."

The Lord exposed not only outward deeds but also the sins of the heart

Today's passage is a word that looks deep into one's own heart. To the person who thinks he is righteous because he has not murdered, Jesus said that whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. To the person who thinks he is clean because he has not committed the act of adultery, He said that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery in his heart. People look at the results that appear outwardly, but the Lord looks at the heart, where sin begins.

Do you think you have nothing to do with the sin of murder because you have never killed anyone? Have you never hated a brother and cursed him in your heart? Do you think you have nothing to do with the sin of adultery because you have never committed a lewd act? Have you never harbored an unclean thought in your heart? Human law may be unable to punish the thoughts of the heart that are not outwardly revealed. But God knows every thought and motive of the heart and judges by His holy word. *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).*

When people evaluate themselves, they lower the standard.

Comparing themselves with those who have committed great crimes, they say they are all right. They think they are rather righteous because they have not gone to prison, they keep their families, and they even attend church. But God does not compare us with other sinners. He judges by the standard of His own perfection and His word. Before that standard, who can say he is righteous by his own deeds?

Concerning the state of the heart, the Scriptures say, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9)*. People say that the heart becomes good by doing good deeds, when they do not even know their own hearts accurately. But God pierces even to soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and searches the thoughts and intents of the heart, so He knows even the sins we hide.

The purpose for which Jesus spoke these words does not lie only in telling us to be a little more careful and try to become perfect people. It is to make us know, through the Lord's standard, that by the deeds of the flesh we can never be righteous before God. Vaguely knowing that one is not perfect is different from admitting that in oneself there is no righteousness at all to present to God and that one deserves judgment. To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must first know our true state accurately before the word.

In the heart that is angry with a brother lies the root of murder

The Law commands, you shall not murder. Many people think they have kept this commandment because they have not actually killed anyone. But Jesus said that whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment, and that whoever

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despises a person and condemns him as a fool shall be in danger of hell fire. Before the act of murder comes out, there are hatred, anger, and contempt in the heart. The Lord said that it is sin from that very root.

People excuse themselves, saying they had reason enough to be angry. They think, since the other person did wrong first, ignored me, and caused me loss, I may hate him. But having a reason does not make hatred righteousness. Pointing out another's fault accurately is different from despising that person in one's heart and wishing he did not exist. We easily rationalize our own anger under the name of righteous indignation.

Jesus said that if, while offering your gift, you remember that your brother has something against you, you should first go and be reconciled to him, and after that come and offer your gift. It means that religious acts cannot cover over the evil done to a person. The sin of hatred does not disappear because one attends worship and gives many offerings. We must not take lightly the wrong done to a brother on the ground that we have offered something to God.

Then does it mean that whoever has once been angry can never come before God again? Even the righteous who have received the remission of sins can be angry and do wrong in the flesh. When we realize we have done wrong, we must admit it, apologize, and turn back. But it is not that, because of that deed, the eternal remission of sin that Jesus completed is canceled and we become sinners again. The righteous do not hide their faults, and yet they believe in the righteousness of the Lord, who bore even those sins through the baptism He received from John.

For the person who is not yet saved, the sin of hatred remains as it is in his heart and in the record of God's judgment. However much he worships, he cannot remove that sin by himself. Reconciling with people is fitting, but reconciling does not also

pay the price of sin before God. Since the wages of sin is death, an unblemished sacrificial offering to bear the sin and the judgment of blood are necessary.

The heart that harbors lust is already adultery before God

The Lord applied the commandment, you shall not commit adultery, to a place deeper than deeds. He said that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery in his heart. A person may restrain the behavior that is seen, but can he keep desire from ever once arising in his heart? Even with a decent face before people, thoughts that no one knows come and go inside the heart.

Before these words, is there anyone who can boast that he has not committed adultery? Can anyone claim that it is not sin because he did not carry it into action? God has ruled that the sin raised in the heart is already adultery. Man's standard says it is all right as long as it does not reach the act, but God's standard says it is sin the moment it is harbored in the heart. Which standard will have effect on the day of judgment? It is, of course, the word of God.

David confessed from where man is a sinner: *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalms 51:5–7).* Man is not a being who was born sinless and became a sinner because of a few mistakes. Because he was born in sin as a descendant of Adam, he fundamentally produces sin from his heart.

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The Scriptures say that through the disobedience of one man, Adam, many became sinners. *"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:18–19).* We are beings born as descendants of sinners, living in the practice of sin, and reaching judgment; but by one Man's obedience—that is, Jesus Christ, who has no fundamental sin, put on the flesh and came to this earth, had the sins of the world passed on to Him by John, and rose from death, obeying the will of God the Father—all the sins, judgment, and curse of mankind have been removed.

Even if the right eye and the right hand are removed, the source of sin remains

Jesus said that it is better to pluck out your right eye if it causes you to sin, and to cut off your right hand if it causes you to sin, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. These are solemn words telling us not to take sin lightly. Since the result of sin is hell, they mean that being under sin is more fearful than losing one part of the body.

But if a person actually removes his right eye and right hand, does he become a person without sin? Does he not sin with his left eye? Even without hands, can he not hate and harbor greed in his heart? Sin does not start from the organs of eye and hand themselves; it comes out of the heart stained with sin. The asceticism of removing parts of the body cannot wash away the sins of the heart.

Some religions teach that afflicting the flesh makes the soul clean. They think that fasting, going without sleep, and abusing one's own body reduce sin. But one cannot buy the remission of sin as the price of tormenting the body. The price of sin is not man's asceticism but death, and the sacrifice God receives must be an unblemished offering. However much a sinner torments his own body, he cannot fully pay even the price of his own sins, let alone the sins of another sinner.

The Scriptures view the whole Law as one. They say, *"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:10–11).* It is not that one passes with ninety points for keeping nine commandments and breaking one. Even by breaking one, he becomes a complete sinner who has broken the whole Law.

The Law stops every mouth and reveals that we are complete sinners

We must know well the purpose for which God gave the Law. People try to keep the Law well and so become righteous. But the Scriptures say, *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19–20).*

The Law makes us realize sin and stops the sinner's mouth. It stops the mouth that boasted, I am better than others, and it stops the mouth that excused itself, saying, this much sin is all

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right. To the one who says he has not murdered, it shows the hatred of his heart; to the one who says he has not committed adultery, it shows his lust. It leaves not a single person able to call himself righteous before God, always under God's judgment.

Are you a person who is a little lacking, or a person who is completely a sinner? This difference is enormously important. Those who think they are a little lacking ask Jesus to fill up only the lacking part. They try to mix the righteousness they think remains in them with the Lord's righteousness. But those who know they are complete sinners give up all their own righteousness and believe only in the Lord's complete salvation.

No one can become righteous by human resolutions and religious acts

Concerning the price of sin, the Scriptures say, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*. The price of sin is not a few drops of tears or a few good deeds. It is death itself. A sinner is cursed eternally in hell even after he dies. That is why the sinless Savior had to take pity on us, receive our sins passed on to Him through John's baptism, and die and be judged in our place.

Religious acts cannot be the price of salvation. Prayer, service, and offerings are precious fruits when a person who has received the remission of sins does them out of thanksgiving. But if they are done as the price for washing away sin, that becomes not believing in the salvation Jesus completed. If man could become righteous by his own deeds, there would have been no need for Jesus to receive baptism from John the Baptist to be passed the sins of the world, to die shedding His blood on the Cross, and then to rise from death.

How did the Apostle Paul look upon the religious boasts that had been gain to him? He said, *"But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith" (Philippians 3:7–9).* To gain the righteousness that is from God, we must let go of the hand that clings to our own righteousness.

God passed sins on to Jesus by the way He had appointed

What a complete sinner needs is complete salvation. God did not cover our sins loosely and pretend that there was no sin. According to His justice, He passed the sins on to an unblemished sacrificial offering and brought the judgment of sin down on that offering. In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the offering and passed his sins onto it, and the offering shed blood and died because of those sins.

The word of the Day of Atonement shows this principle still more clearly. It says, *"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus*

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16:21–22). All the iniquities and all the sins of the children of Israel were laid on the head of the goat through the laying on of the high priest's hands. There was clearly a process of passing sins on by the laying on of hands.

The One who actually completed this sacrificial system once for all is Jesus Christ. Jesus received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of all mankind and the last High Priest, and so was passed the sins of all mankind; as the price of those sins He poured out His blood and died on the Cross, and then rose again in three days, fulfilling all the righteousness that saves complete sinners. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which makes a sinner a completely righteous person.

The whole passage in which Jesus fulfilled all righteousness records it like this: *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:13–17)*. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus was passed all the sins of our hearts and deeds and bore them; because of those sins He was judged on the Cross, shed His blood and died; and He rose from death, completing all the righteousness of God.

Here lies the reason John the Baptist testified of Jesus as *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. The sin of the world does not contain only the murder and

adultery revealed before people. It includes the anger, hatred, and lust harbored in the heart, the sins we do not remember, and all the sins we commit from birth until death. Jesus was passed all this sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from death.

If one believes only in the blood of the Cross, he cannot explain how sins passed over to Jesus. Why was the sinless One judged? It is because Jesus was passed the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, actually died shedding His blood on the Cross because of those sins, and rose again in three days. Only when the passing of sins through the baptism, the bloodshed and death on the Cross, and the resurrection from death are joined into one is it the whole gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus has perfected believers with one eternal sacrifice

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were repeated. It was because people sinned again and the offerings were not eternal offerings. But the sacrifice Jesus Christ offered does not need to be repeated. It is because He was passed all the sins of the world—past, present, and future—through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, shed His blood and died once for all on the Cross, and then rose again.

The Scriptures testify of this perfection like this: *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one*

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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 10:10–14).

Here appear the words: once for all, one eternal sacrifice, and perfected forever. God has perfected us forever; can anyone then say that a person becomes a sinner again on the ground that he has sinned today? To say so is to regard one's own deeds as greater than God's eternal salvation. It does not mean that the flesh of the saved person has become perfect; it means that, because Jesus paid the price of all sins completely, our standing before God has become that of the righteous, without sin forever.

The completely righteous person is not one who boasts that his own deeds are perfect. He knows that in his flesh there is nothing good and that he can be weak at any time. But he believes that his sins were all passed on to Jesus and that the judgment of those sins is finished. So he does not look at his own deeds and go back and forth between righteous and sinner. He believes God's verdict within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Scriptures say, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1–4).* From that state in which the Law, weak through the flesh, had left us under the law of sin and death, Jesus has set us free forever by the law of the

Spirit of life.

The righteous do good not as a condition for the remission of sin but as the fruit of faith

Then does it mean that, since we have received the eternal remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we may sin as we please? No. The righteous who have received the remission of sins have escaped from being slaves of sin and become those who serve God. We do not become righteous by doing good; we do good because we have become righteous. If the order is reversed, the gospel becomes the Law.

When the righteous person has done wrong to a brother, he does not put forward his own standing and despise him. He admits his fault and seeks to be reconciled. When lustful thoughts or greed arise in his heart, he admits the evil of the flesh and restrains it, following the word. This is not a deed to obtain the remission of sin again, but the fruit of faith seeking to live worthy of the grace already received.

The person who thinks he is righteous by his own deeds finds it hard to admit his faults. It is because his own righteousness crumbles. But the righteous who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit already know that there is no righteousness in their flesh, and so they have no reason to hide their faults. Since they became righteous not by their own righteousness but by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, they can turn back honestly.

Also, the righteous do not look only at another person's fleshly shortcomings and cast away his soul. It is because they know that they, too, were complete sinners but were saved by the grace of the Lord. Yet they do not call sin right or leave evil alone. They discern by the word and exhort rightly, and they

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pray that that person, too, will believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins, and live by faith.

Good deeds are truly the fruit of the one born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A tree bears fruit because it is alive; hanging fruit on a dead tree does not bring it back to life. First we must receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and gain new life. After that, when we follow the Spirit, love the brothers, and keep away from evil, the fruit of living for the gospel is borne.

We must give up our own perfection and believe in the perfection the Lord fulfilled

What kind of person have you been shown to be before the Lord's word today? Are you a decent person because you have not murdered and have not committed adultery? Or are you a complete sinner who hates and harbors lust in the heart and cannot keep the perfect word of God? If the self-diagnosis is wrong, one also believes in salvation wrongly.

Jesus did not bear only a part of our sins. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He was passed the sins of the world in their entirety; bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross, shed His blood and died; and by rising from death He saved us from all sins and curses. The person who believes this fact is a righteous person with no sin in his heart, even though his deeds are lacking. It is because God has perfected him forever with one offering.

Even after believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, when we look at our own flesh, shortcomings come into view. But each time, instead of going back to being a sinner, we must look to the Lord who removed our sins completely. If our own

deeds were the ground of salvation, salvation would crumble whenever our deeds crumble. But the ground of salvation is the unchanging fact that Jesus was passed our sins through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again; therefore the remission of sin of those who believe is also complete.

Where are your sins now? Do they still remain in your heart? Or did Jesus receive them passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, judge them by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and remove them all by rising again? The Scriptures say that the sin of the world passed over to the Lamb of God. Do not believe your own feelings more than this word.

The Lord has called complete sinners and made them completely righteous. A complete sinner does not mean a person who has committed especially many great sins. He is a person who knows that by his own strength he can never fulfill the word of God and can only go to hell. A completely righteous person is not a person without a single flaw in the deeds of the flesh, but a person who has received the remission of all sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Do not hear today's word only as a command to adorn your deeds still more. First admit before the Law that you are a complete sinner. And believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by being passed all sins through the baptism He received from John, paying the price of those sins by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rising from death. Then God receives you as a completely righteous person without sin.

We do not believe in our own deeds. We believe in Jesus Christ, who has perfected us forever. Though weak in the flesh, we are righteous by faith; in our hearts there is no sin, and the

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Holy Spirit dwells in us. With this faith we must be reconciled with our brothers, keep away from evil, and live preaching to the very end the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has saved us completely. ✉

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CHAPTER

6

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Matthew Chapter 6

< Matthew 6:1-34 >

“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. ‘And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. ‘Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the

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glory forever. Amen. ‘For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. ‘Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ‘Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ‘The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ‘No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. ‘Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? ‘So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither

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toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 'Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 6 is the chapter that teaches that the charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting of the people of the kingdom of God must come not from hypocrisy that seeks the praise of men but from true faith toward God. Jesus tells us to do good, pray, and fast before God, who sees in secret. Through the Lord's Prayer, He teaches us to seek first God's name, kingdom, and will, and to ask for daily bread, the remission of sins, and spiritual protection. He then warns that we must count the treasures of heaven more precious than the earthly riches that decay and can be taken away, and that we cannot serve God and riches as masters at the same time. Finally, He tells us to believe the fact that God, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, knows the needs of His children, and to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness rather than being gripped by the problems of

eating and clothing. The heart of this chapter is turning the direction of the heart from faith that is seen by men to faith that looks to God, and from a life ruled by riches and worry to a life that trusts God and seeks His kingdom first.

1. Do not practice your righteousness to be seen by men (verse 1)

"'Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:1).

Jesus did not tell us not to do righteous deeds; He told us not to practice righteousness with the aim of being recognized by men. Even the same good deed has a different meaning before God depending on whose eyes and praise it seeks.

Faith meant to be seen by men is hypocrisy that counts people's evaluation more important than God. If a person has obtained the praise of men, he has already received the reward he wanted, so there is no reward for him to receive from God. God looks not only at the outwardly revealed act but also at the motive of that act.

2. Do charitable deeds in secret (verses 2–4)

"But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Matthew 6:3–4).

The hypocrite makes known what he gives and tries to gain glory from men. But true charity is not a means of exalting one's own name; it is helping neighbors in need and serving God.

The words, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, mean that we should help with a pure heart,

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without displaying ourselves as far as possible. We must not keep counting or boasting of the good we have done. Though people may not know, God, who sees in secret, remembers and repays.

3. Guarding against prayer meant to be seen by men (verses 5–8)

Jesus warned the hypocrites who prayed in the synagogues and on the streets to be seen by men. These words do not mean that all public prayer and corporate prayer are forbidden. What He forbade was turning prayer from a conversation with God into a means of showing off one's own godliness to people.

"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matthew 6:6).

The prayer of the inner room means prayer that escapes the evaluation of men and looks only to God. God hears even prayer offered quietly and the petitions within the heart.

"And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words" (Matthew 6:7).

Not to use vain repetitions does not mean that we must not pray about the same problem several times. It means that we should not repeat words meaninglessly or think we can move God by the length and number of our words. God knows His children's needs even before they ask. Prayer, therefore, is not an act of giving God information but entrusting one's needs and heart to the Father in faith.

4. The prayer that seeks first God's name, kingdom, and will (verses 9–10)

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9–10).

The prayer Jesus taught is not simply a sentence to be repeated like a spell; it is a model showing what we should pray for, in what order, and with what heart.

Prayer begins by first calling God *"Our Father."* This shows that prayer is not the act of speaking in fear to a distant deity but the relationship of a child coming to the heavenly Father.

To ask that God's name be hallowed is to desire that God's name be exalted in one's own life and in the world. To ask that God's kingdom come and His will be done on earth as well is a prayer that puts God's rule and plan before one's own desires.

5. Asking for daily bread, the remission of sins, and protection (verses 11–13)

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11).

Daily bread includes the physical, mental, and spiritual provision needed for that day's life. We must acknowledge that man is not a being who lives by his own ability alone but one who lives receiving God's provision and grace every day. The expression asking for *"our"* bread, not "my" bread, also makes us look after the needs of our neighbors.

"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

The person who asks God for the remission of sins must also forgive those who have sinned against him. Forgiveness does not mean approving the other person's wrong as right or asking no responsibility at all. It is laying down hatred and

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vengefulness, and desiring that the other person turn back and the relationship be restored.

"And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13).

Since man cannot overcome every temptation and evil by his own strength alone, he must ask for God's protection and guidance. We must not take dangerous temptations lightly, but stay awake and pray so as not to fall into sin.

6. Forgive the trespasses of others (verses 14–15)

Jesus said that if we forgive men their trespasses, God will also remit our trespasses, but that if we do not forgive, God will not remit our trespasses either. To ask God for the remission of one's own sins while holding on to another person's wrongs to the end and trying to take revenge is a contradiction.

Forgiveness is not unconditionally erasing the wounds and the legal and practical responsibilities caused by a wrong. It is entrusting judgment to God and laying down one's personal hatred and right of revenge. The person who knows God's mercy must also show mercy to others.

7. Fast also before God (verses 16–18)

"But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place" (Matthew 6:17–18).

The hypocrites disfigured their faces and looked sad in order to reveal the fact that they were fasting. Jesus told us to keep our ordinary, neat appearance and fast looking only to God.

Fasting is not an act for being recognized by people as an especially godly person. It is an act of restraining the desires of

the flesh in order to concentrate on God and pray. Charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting are all works directed toward God, so they must not have the praise of men as their aim.

8. Lay up treasures in heaven (verses 19–21)

"'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19).

Earthly riches are necessary, but they are not eternal. They can wear out, decay, or be lost, and they cannot be taken along at death. Jesus did not forbid owning property or preparing for the future itself; He told us not to make riches the ultimate security and purpose of life.

To lay up treasures in heaven is to use one's time, possessions, and abilities for the work that pleases God and for neighbors in need. What is done out of love for God and according to His will does not vanish like the riches of the world.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

A person spends his time and possessions on what he counts important in his heart. At the same time, his heart also follows the place where his time and possessions keep being spent. What one regards as treasure shows where that person's heart is.

9. The eye is the lamp of the body (verses 22–23)

"'The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light" (Matthew 6:22).

The eye shows what a person looks at and counts important. If we look rightly at God and His kingdom, our whole life moves in a bright direction; but if we look only at riches and

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desires, our judgment and life grow dark.

These words are not a teaching about physical eyesight but about the gaze of the heart and one's values. According to what we look at as we live, our choices, actions, and the direction of our life change.

10. God and riches cannot both be served as masters (verse 24)

"'No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

It does not mean that riches themselves are evil. Riches can be a necessary tool for living and for good works. But when riches become the master of the heart, a person comes to follow the orders of money rather than God.

Between God and riches, the master must be one. A disciple must use riches as a tool entrusted to him by God; he must not abandon God, conscience, and neighbor in order to gain riches.

11. Do not worry about eating and clothing (verses 25–32)

Jesus told us to look at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. The birds neither farm nor store grain in barns, yet God feeds them, and He clothes even the wildflowers that bloom for a moment and disappear more beautifully than Solomon's garments. How much more, He says, will God not care for man?

The words, do not worry, do not mean that we need not work or plan. They mean that, while fulfilling the responsibilities we ought to bear, we should not try to control the future completely or let our hearts be taken captive by the

problems of eating and clothing.

Worry cannot solve problems and can even take away the strength needed to bear today. Since God knows what His children need, we should honestly ask for what we need, do what we can, and entrust the results to God.

12. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (verses 33–34)

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

To seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness does not mean ignoring one's livelihood, family, and responsibilities. It means setting the highest standard of every choice on God's rule and will, and giving priority to what God says is right.

God knows and cares for the needs of His children. The promise that *"all these things"* shall be added does not mean that every desire and luxury will surely be given; it is a promise that He supplies what is needed to live according to God's will.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:34).

We must not drag tomorrow's problems, which have not yet come, into today and suffer twice. We should be faithful to today's work and the hardships given today, and entrust tomorrow into God's hands.

The core meaning of Matthew chapter 6

First, charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting must be done not as religious display to be praised by men but in faith toward God, who sees in secret.

Second, prayer is not an act of moving God by the length

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and repetition of words but seeking first His name, kingdom, and will while trusting the Father, who knows our needs.

Third, the person who asks God for the remission of sins must forgive those who have wronged him and lay down hatred and vengefulness.

Fourth, since earthly riches are temporary, we must lay up treasures in heaven by using our time, possessions, and abilities for the work that pleases God.

Fifth, riches can be a necessary tool, but they cannot become the master of the heart together with God.

Sixth, God counts His children more precious than the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, so we must not be gripped by the problems of eating and clothing but trust His care.

Seventh, the priority of the life of faith is the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and while fulfilling today's responsibilities we must entrust tomorrow's worries to God.

To sum up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 6 is the chapter that teaches that the people of the kingdom of God must do charitable deeds, pray, and fast looking to God rather than to the praise of men, and must live seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness without making riches and worry their master.

2) Matthew chapter 6 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Matthew chapter 6 is not a chapter that teaches what religious acts we must do in order to obtain the righteousness of God; it is a chapter that teaches how the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live before God the Father. Because Jesus

bore the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and rose again, completing the righteousness of God, charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting are not merits for obtaining salvation but fruits of faith borne by the person who has already been saved.

At the center of Matthew chapter 6 stands the contrast between faith that is seen by men and faith lived before God. Charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting done to be recognized by men display one's own righteousness, but the person who believes in God, who sees in secret, seeks God's will rather than the praise of men. Jesus also told us to lay up treasures in heaven rather than treasures on earth, not to serve riches as master, and not to be gripped by the worries of living but to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

1. Warning against righteousness done to be seen by men (verses 1–4)

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:1).

Jesus did not forbid charity itself; He examined the motive of charity. If a person gives in order to be praised by men or to display his own godliness, he has already received his reward from men, so there is no reward for him to receive from God. Charity must not be a means of proving one's own righteousness but a service that shares with neighbors the grace received from God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit says that man's good deeds can neither wash away sin nor complete salvation. All the sins of man were borne by Jesus through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and were resolved when He was judged on the Cross. Therefore the charitable deeds done by

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the saved person are not a price paid to obtain the remission of sins but an expression of gratitude for the grace received freely.

"But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Matthew 6:3–4)—these words mean, more than a formal rule that good deeds must always be done without anyone knowing, that we must not set the center of our deeds on the recognition of men. God looks not only at the size of the deed but at the faith and the heart that made the person do it.

2. Prayer offered believing in God the Father (verses 5–8)

The hypocrites loved to pray in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets in order to be seen by men. To them prayer was less a communion with God than a stage for displaying their own godliness. But Jesus told us to go into our room, shut the door, and pray to the Father who is in the secret place.

The heart of the prayer of the inner room does not lie only in the place. It means praying with a true heart, out of the sight of men, depending on God alone. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not face God only as a fearful Judge but can come to Him calling Him Father. The way for God to become our Father was opened not by human prayer or good deeds but by Jesus removing all our sins through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Jesus also told us not to use vain repetitions like the heathen. It is not that God hears when words are repeated many times. God already knows what we need before we ask. True prayer is not an incantation to persuade God but the communion of faith

in which we believe God as Father, entrust our circumstances and desires to Him, and seek His will.

3. The priorities of the saved revealed in the Lord's Prayer (verses 9–13)

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:9–13).

The Lord's Prayer is not a spell that takes effect just by repeating its sentences; it is the model of prayer that teaches what the saved person should seek first.

The address *"Our Father in heaven"* contains the relationship between God and the saved person. A sinner cannot become God's child by his own deeds. But whoever believes in the salvation by which Jesus bore his sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross, and rose again, is washed of all his sins and becomes a child of God.

The prayer that God's name be hallowed is a prayer that we may not disgrace God's name by our lives, and that through the preaching of the gospel more people may know God's salvation and give Him glory. The prayer that God's kingdom may come includes the desire that souls bound by sin may believe the gospel, be saved, and come into God's rule.

In the prayer *"Give us this day our daily bread"* is included not only the food needed for living but also the food of God's word and of the gospel that the soul must eat. The saved person, too, must eat the word daily, renew his faith, and be supplied

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by God with the strength to serve the gospel.

4. The remission of sins and a life of forgiving the trespasses of others (verses 12, 14–15)

"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors"—these words must not be understood to mean that salvation is accomplished anew and sins are washed away little by little each time we pray every day. All the sins of mankind were borne by Jesus once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and their price was paid in full on the Cross. Whoever believes this fact is washed of all sins at once and becomes righteous.

Yet even the person who has received the remission of sins can do wrong and wound others because of the weakness of the flesh. At such times he must acknowledge his fault before God and turn back, and remembering the mercy he has received, he must also forgive the trespasses of others. This is not an act for obtaining the eternal remission of sin all over again but the life of keeping right fellowship with God the Father.

The act of forgiving others does not become a condition of salvation. Rather, the heart that pities and forgives others comes out of the person who truly believes the fact that all his sins were remitted without any merit of his own. The remission of sin received must not remain as knowledge in the head but must appear as the fruits of mercy and forgiveness within relationships.

5. Fasting that is not seen by men (verses 16–18)

The hypocrites disfigured their faces and put on sad countenances in order to show the fact that they were fasting. But Jesus told us to anoint our heads and wash our faces when we fast. It means not boasting of fasting to men but showing it

only to God, who is in the secret place.

Fasting is not a merit that washes away one's sins or draws out a greater blessing from God. Human asceticism can add nothing to the salvation completed by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In true fasting there must be a heart that restrains one's fleshly desires and seeks first God's will and the work of the gospel. What matters is not the hours gone hungry or the size of the pain but the faith and the center directed toward God.

6. The treasures of the earth and the treasures of heaven (verses 19–21)

Treasures laid up on earth are destroyed by moth and rust, and thieves can take them away. Property, honor, and fleshly achievement may be needed in this world, but they cannot guarantee eternal life. The treasures laid up in heaven, however, do not disappear.

For the saved person, the greatest treasure is the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Furthermore, using one's time, possessions, and strength for the work of preaching this gospel, and serving so that one soul may be saved, is the life of laying up treasures in heaven.

As the words *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21)* say, what a person counts most precious determines the direction of his heart and life. The person who regards the gospel as the most precious treasure naturally comes to set his heart on the kingdom of God and on the work of saving souls.

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7. The eye, the lamp of the body, and the direction of faith (verses 22–23)

If the eye is good, the whole body is full of light, but if the eye is bad, the whole body becomes dark. Here the eye indicates what a person looks at and what he counts valuable. If we look only at our own righteousness and the desires of the world, our spiritual judgment grows dark; but if we look at the salvation God has completed, the direction of our life becomes bright.

The eye of faith must not stay fixed on our own deeds and feelings. We must neither think that salvation is shaken because of our shortcomings nor consider ourselves more righteous because of our good deeds. When we look at the word—that Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John and ended the judgment on the Cross—our faith is not shaken and the standard of our life also becomes clear.

8. God and riches cannot be served together (verse 24)

"'No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

Riches themselves are not sin. Riches are a tool that can be used profitably for living and for the work of the gospel. But if riches become the master of the heart and rule every judgment and choice, we cannot serve God fully.

The saved person can avoid becoming a slave of money without throwing money away. He should use with thanksgiving the material things God has given, yet count the gospel and souls more precious than riches. Material things are not a master to be served but a tool to be used in accomplishing God's will.

9. From the worries of life to faith that trusts God (verses 25–32)

Jesus told us not to worry about what to eat, what to drink, or what to wear. God, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, is not ignorant of what His children need. Just as worrying cannot add one cubit to one's stature, worry does not solve the problem but rather binds the heart to the world.

These words do not mean that we should not work or prepare for the days ahead. They mean that we should do our work faithfully while entrusting the sovereignty over life and its results to God. If God solved the greatest problem of all—sin and death—through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, He can also look after the daily needs of His children.

When faith is small, a person worries as though God did not know his circumstances. But the person who believes the gospel believes that God is the Father who not only saved him from sin but also leads his life. He asks for what he needs, yet does not distrust God when things do not go as he desires; he gives thanks in the circumstances given and lives for the gospel and for righteous work.

10. Seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (verses 33–34)

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:33–34).

The righteousness of God is not a righteousness that man produces by piling up good deeds. It is the righteousness Jesus

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completed by bearing all sins through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising again. When a sinner believes in this righteousness of God, he receives the remission of sins and becomes righteous regardless of his own deeds.

To seek first the kingdom of God is to seek that this gospel may be preached to more people so that sinners may be saved, and that God's will may be done in our hearts and lives. Using one's time, possessions, and talents for the gospel and for souls is also the life that seeks first the kingdom of God.

The words *"all these things shall be added to you"* do not mean that all the wealth and success one wants are guaranteed. It is the promise that God knows what His people who live for the gospel need and supplies it fittingly. The saved person does not embrace all of tomorrow's problems in advance today; he is faithful to the work entrusted today and entrusts tomorrow to God.

The core meaning of Matthew chapter 6

First, charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting are not merits for obtaining salvation but fruits of faith borne by the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Second, true faith escapes the hypocrisy that seeks the praise of men and acts before God, who sees in secret.

Third, the Lord's Prayer teaches us to seek first God's name, kingdom, and will, and then to ask for daily bread, the remission of sins, and spiritual protection.

Fourth, the saved person believes that Jesus washed away all sins completely through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the Cross, and with the mercy he has received he must forgive the trespasses of others.

Fifth, the greatest treasure of heaven is the gospel of the remission of sin completed by Christ, and the life of preaching that gospel and serving souls is the life of laying up treasures in heaven.

Sixth, riches are a tool to be used, not a master to be served, so God and riches cannot be served together.

Seventh, the person who believes that God has solved the problem of sin and death can trust the Father, who also cares for the needs of life, and entrust his worries to Him.

Eighth, to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness is to believe and preach the completed gospel and to offer one's life for the salvation of souls and the will of God.

To sum up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 6 is the chapter that teaches that the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of God, which Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, must cast away faith that is meant to be seen by men, pray trusting God the Father, lay up treasures in heaven, entrust his worries to God, and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. ✉

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Matthew Chapter 6

Jesus told us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness

Introduction

Matthew chapter 6 teaches that the life of faith of the righteous must be lived not before the eyes of men but before God, who sees in secret. Charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting are precious works in themselves, but if they are done with a heart that wants to look godly and be praised by men, they become hypocrisy that seeks one's own glory. God sees not only the size of the act but also the motive and the center of the person doing it.

The person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not try to buy salvation with good deeds or to establish his own righteousness. Jesus received all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again in three days, completing salvation. The person who believes this gospel becomes a righteous person reconciled with God, calls Him Father, and out of gratitude for the grace already received, helps his neighbors in secret, prays, and restrains himself.

The prayer Jesus taught is not an incantation for achieving one's own desires. It is a prayer that first seeks that God's name be hallowed and that His kingdom and will be

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accomplished, and asks the Father daily for the needed bread and for protection from temptation. Moreover, the person who has received the complete remission of sin must forgive those who have wronged him and pray that the grace of the salvation he received may be delivered even to souls who do not know the gospel.

Jesus told us to lay up treasures in heaven, not on earth only. This is not a word forbidding labor or saving for one's living; it means not making perishable riches the master of life and one's eternal security. Since God and riches cannot both be served as masters, the righteous must use their material things, time, and talents for the kingdom of God, the gospel, and the salvation of souls.

Worry about food and clothing is also, in the end, a question of what one believes and depends on. God is the One who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, and He knows what His children need. Therefore the righteous must not lose today's mission by being gripped by tomorrow's worries, but must believe the promise that God cares, and seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Matthew chapter 6 teaches us to turn from the life that chases the recognition of men and riches, to serve God alone as Master, and to live counting the gospel and the life of the soul most precious.

Jesus told us to do charitable deeds in secret, looking to God, not seeking the glory of men

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in

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the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Matthew 6:1–4).

Matthew chapter 6 deals not only with the good deeds a person does outwardly but also with the motive of the heart in doing them. The same charitable deed can be done believing God and loving one's neighbor, or it can be done to gain people's praise and respect. People see the revealed act, but God sees both the center and the purpose of the heart from which that act came.

To do righteousness *"to be seen by them"* does not refer to every case of doing good where others can see. Jesus had earlier told us to let the light of believers shine before men, so that they may see their good works and glorify God. What is forbidden here is not the fact that a good deed becomes known but the hypocrisy of staging good deeds with the aim of being recognized by men.

The hypocrite is more interested in looking like a good person than in actually helping his neighbor in need. He puts his own name and reputation before the needs and dignity of the person receiving help. He publicizes the fact of his charity, speaks repeatedly of how much he has sacrificed, and if others do not recognize him, he feels hurt or even stops doing good. He has done good, yet at the center of it sits not God but his own glory.

The words *"do not sound a trumpet before you"* are a strong expression telling us not to make charity a means of self-promotion. The hypocrites tried to gain glory by displaying their good deeds in the synagogues and the streets

where people gathered. Today, too, people can exaggerate and publicize their donations and service, carelessly expose the hard circumstances of those who received help, and use good deeds as a means of raising their own influence.

Jesus said of such people, *"they have their reward."* If they obtained the praise and respect of men that they wanted, they have already received the reward they pursued. But the applause of men lasts only a moment and cannot become an eternal reward before God. A deed that looks as if done for God but was actually done to exalt one's own name cannot become the righteousness of faith that pleases God.

The words *"do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing"* do not mean that one side of the body should literally not know the other side's action. They mean not to keep counting the good one has done, boasting of it and storing it up in one's heart. It is the attitude of not crediting the merit of good deeds even to oneself, going beyond simply not telling others. It is serving quietly with the heart that one has only done what a person who received grace ought to do.

The word to do charity in secret is also not an absolute rule to always hide one's identity or erase all records. For a church or an organization to manage its finances transparently, the details of charity may need to be recorded and confirmed by those in charge. There are also cases where needs must be made known so that many people can help together. What matters is not outward secrecy but the heart that acts in faith for God's will and the neighbor's good, without seeking the glory of men.

God, who sees in secret, knows even the service that no one recognizes. People may not see the small material things shared, the time spent listening to someone in hardship, or the labor offered for the gospel, but God sees even the center of it all.

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Therefore the believer has no need to be discouraged at not being recognized by men or to display his good deeds on purpose. He must believe the fact that God remembers and repays at the most fitting time and in the most fitting way.

The reward God gives here is not a price paid for obtaining the remission of sins. A sinner does not become righteous by doing much charity or by doing good without anyone knowing. Human good deeds are easily mixed with self-boasting and the desire for reward, so they can never reach the perfect righteousness of God. When salvation and reward are confused, even charity turns into a religious act for establishing one's own righteousness.

A person may adorn his outward appearance neatly, but he cannot remove by himself the hypocrisy and pride deep in his heart. The desire to be praised by others, the thought that one is more righteous, and even the heart that demands a price after bestowing a favor are all sins before God. Therefore everyone must admit, before putting forward his own good deeds, that he is a sinner who cannot be saved without the grace of God.

Jesus came to save such sinners. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore all the sins of mankind, including the hypocrisy that wants to be seen by men and the pride that seeks its own glory. The sinless Son of God accepted the responsibility of sinners into His own body and became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

After being passed the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus was crucified, shed His blood, and died. He received in our place the judgment of sin that we should have received, was buried, and rose again on the third day. Thus He accomplished the complete remission of sin and the eternal salvation that human good deeds can never achieve.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching of works that says we are saved by doing many secret charitable deeds. It is the gospel that believes the fact that Jesus bore all the sins of believers through the baptism He received from John and ended the judgment of sin by the Cross and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of sins and becomes righteous before God, not by his own merit but by the righteousness accomplished by Jesus Christ.

On the person born again by believing that Jesus received all sins passed on to Him through the baptism from John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit comes. He becomes a child of God who can call God his *"Father in heaven,"* and he lives looking not to the recognition of men but to the Father's will. Charity, too, becomes not a condition for being saved but a fruit of faith that shares with neighbors the love and grace received freely.

The righteous born again of the gospel of the water and the Spirit must know that they belong not only to the visible world but to the world of Christ. The culture of the world tries to use good deeds to raise one's name and influence, but the righteous offer their material things, time, and heart for the kingdom of God and the spread of the gospel. Whether they eat or drink or whatever they do, they make the glory of God and the salvation of other souls their aim.

The Holy Spirit keeps the one who gives from looking down on the one who receives. Because he knows that he, too, was saved without any merit of his own, he does not grow proud for having much and does not force gratitude or submission on the receiver. He does not spread the other person's circumstances carelessly but protects that person's dignity, and he looks into what is actually needed and helps wisely.

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A large amount given does not necessarily mean great faith, nor is a small amount without value. God looks not at the outward scale but at the faith and purpose with which it was offered. The one who has plenty shares more of what he has received from God, and the one in hard circumstances can also serve within his means with material things, time, and talents. What matters is doing it with a willing heart before God, without competing or comparing.

Even a believer, after doing good, can expect people's praise or feel hurt when no one recognizes him. At such times he must honestly examine his own motive and return to the gospel that saved him completely. He must not rationalize a hypocritical heart but receive the rebuke of the Holy Spirit and turn back, and serve again so that not his own name but the name of Jesus Christ and the gospel may be revealed.

Conversely, it is not the meaning of this passage to avoid even necessary good deeds for fear of being seen by others. When someone who needs help is before our eyes, we must not look away on the grounds that "it must be done in secret." More important than whether it becomes known to men is for whom and with what heart it is done. Charity done in faith can give glory to God even in a public place, and it can also continue faithfully where no one sees.

Matthew 6:1–4 asks who the master of the heart is rather than the outward form of charity. The hypocrite does good to gain the glory of men and receives all his reward in their praise. But the righteous who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit serve their neighbors believing in God, who sees in secret, not in people's evaluation. They do not buy salvation or build their own righteousness with charity; they share what they have in gratitude for the salvation already received and live for the

kingdom of God and the gospel. Even the small service forgotten by men God knows and remembers all of it, and He surely repays fittingly the labor done in faith.

Jesus taught the prayer that the person who has become God's child through the gospel offers in faith

"And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 'Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. 'For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:5–15).

Jesus did not forbid prayer itself; He set right the object and the purpose of prayer. The hypocrites loved to pray in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets. The problem was

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not the public place or the fact of praying aloud but the heart that wanted to look godly and be praised by men. They dressed it up as words offered to God, but their actual audience was people.

The words to *"go into your room, and when you have shut your door"* pray do not mean that all corporate prayer is forbidden. Jesus and His disciples also prayed together. The inner room signifies the center of prayer that cuts off the eyes of men and looks only to God. Whether one prays alone or the church prays together, we must not try to make people hear; We must ask God, who knows our circumstances and needs, with a true heart.

The word not to use vain repetitions also does not mean that we may not pray again about the same matter. Jesus also prayed repeatedly over an earnest request. What He rebuked here is the attitude of pagan religion that thinks a god is persuaded when one speaks many words and mechanically repeats the same phrases. The length of a prayer or its splendid expressions do not prove faith. Since God knows what we need before we ask, His children can ask the Father honestly and plainly.

Then why must we pray when God already knows all our needs? Prayer is not informing God of new information; it is the act of faith of acknowledging our own inability, depending on the Father, and uniting our hearts to God's will. Through prayer God makes His children discern what His will is rather than chasing only their own desires, and believe that will and actually do it.

The Lord's Prayer is not a sentence given just to be repeated exactly like a spell. Jesus taught what the people of the kingdom of God should believe, seek, and live for. The first words, *"Our Father in heaven,"* do not mean that anyone

becomes God's child just by calling Him so with the mouth. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has received the Holy Spirit becomes God's child and can truly call Him Father.

A person cannot enjoy unhindered fellowship with the holy God while he has sin. So Jesus, to save sinners, bore all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John. He accepted into His own body even all the wrong prayers offered in hypocrisy and unbelief, with unforgiving hearts and selfish desires.

After being passed the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus received in their place the judgment of those sins on the Cross. He shed His blood and died, was buried, and rose again on the third day, defeating sin and death. Whoever believes in this salvation has the sins of his heart completely washed away, becomes righteous, and can come boldly before God and pray.

The petition *"Hallowed be Your name"* does not mean that God's name is not holy in itself and must be made holy. It asks that people may know and believe the salvation God has accomplished and exalt His name, and that the saved believers also may live worthy of the gospel and not disgrace God's name. The most fundamental way to glorify God's name is to believe and keep the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given and to preach it to other souls.

The words *"Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven"* are first a prayer that God's salvation may be accomplished in people's hearts. Jesus completed salvation according to the plan of heaven, but if a person does not hear that truth and believe it with the heart, the kingdom of God does not come into his heart. Therefore the believer must pray and labor that those who do not yet know the gospel may

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receive the remission of sins, that the gospel may be preached to the whole world through the church, and that God's will may be done in his own life as well.

In the prayer *"Give us this day our daily bread"* is included the food and the provision the body needs. At the same time, the born-again need daily the food of the word that gives life to the soul. When we keep engraving the gospel of the water and the Spirit on our hearts, hear the word, and do the work of the gospel God has entrusted, the Holy Spirit gives new strength and joy. The believer must not depend on his own ability alone but ask the Father daily for everything the body and the soul need.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching that we receive the remission of sins by praying much. It is the gospel that believes the fact that Jesus bore all the sins of believers through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation by the Cross and the resurrection. Therefore the prayer *"And forgive us our debts"* is not a prayer to be saved anew by washing again every day the sins Christ has already removed.

The person who believes that Jesus was passed all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist has already received the eternal remission of sin. Yet even the righteous can wrong others and create hindrances in the heart through the weakness of the flesh. This petition is a prayer to acknowledge one's faults before God, to confirm again the remission of sin already received through the gospel, and to correct one's wrongs following the guidance of the Holy Spirit and restore fellowship with the brothers.

The person who believes that he has received the remission of his countless sins before God must also forgive the trespasses of others. Forgiveness is not calling the other

person's wrong good or pretending there was no harm. Even while speaking the wrong plainly and holding the person appropriately accountable, it is not condemning that person in vengeance and hating him to the end. Believing that Jesus Christ bore that person's sins as well, we must seek the way of reconciliation.

Verses 14–15 do not mean that the act of forgiving others is the condition for obtaining the eternal remission of sin. If man's perfect forgiveness were the condition of salvation, no one could be sure of salvation. These words are a solemn warning that a child of God who has received the remission of sins by grace cannot live holding on to a brother's trespasses, and that if he stubbornly refuses to forgive, blockage arises also in his fellowship with God and in the answers to his prayers. The person who believes in the remission of sin he has received comes to accept others as well, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The prayer *"And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one"* is a petition acknowledging that the believer cannot overcome temptation and the enticement of Satan by his own strength. We must ask to be protected from falling into temptations that shake our faith and pull us away from the church and the gospel. At the same time, believing that He gives the wisdom and strength to avoid evil, we must remain in the word and in the church and actually keep away from evil, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The confession *"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever"* declares that the purpose of prayer lies not in human desire and glory but in God. The person who prays does not make God a means of fulfilling his own wishes but entrusts even his needs and plans under God's rule. He entrusts the time and the way of the answer to God, and seeks

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first the accomplishment of God's kingdom and the good of the gospel.

The believer has no need to adorn religious expressions or exaggerate emotions when he prays. Since God already knows the state of our hearts, we may ask honestly for what we need and pray concretely for the preaching of the gospel, for the church, and for other souls. After praying with the mouth, we must not live contrary to that prayer: if we asked for God's kingdom to come, we preach the gospel; if we asked for daily bread, we faithfully do the work given to us; and if we asked for the remission of sins, we first practice reconciliation.

Matthew 6:5–15 teaches not the prayer for looking godly before men but the prayer of the child who has been reconciled to God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The born-again righteous believe in the Father, who sees in secret; they seek first God's name, kingdom, and will, and they ask daily for the needed bread and for protection from temptation. They also remember the complete remission of sin they have received and forgive the trespasses of others. Prayer is not a religious act that displays one's own righteousness; it is the life of faith in which the person saved through the gospel depends on the Father, receives the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and accomplishes God's will on this earth.

Jesus taught the fasting of faith that looks only to God, not fasting to be seen by men

"Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head

and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly" (Matthew 6:16–18).

In Matthew chapter 6, Jesus spoke of fasting following charity and prayer. All three are acts of faith that serve God, but if they are done with a heart that wants to be seen and praised by men, they can become hypocrisy. God does not look only at the days gone hungry or the suffering face; He looks at what the fasting is for and whom it looks to.

Fasting is not a religious asceticism that counts food itself evil or torments the body. It is entrusting to God a problem hard to solve or a weighty prayer topic, while abstaining from food for a set time and praying with greater concentration. It is the attitude of faith that admits one cannot solve it by one's own strength and methods and earnestly seeks God's help.

Jesus did not say, do not fast; He taught how to act *"when you fast."* The believer can fast and pray for the preaching of the gospel and the church, for souls in hardship, for temptations that shake his faith, or for problems that must surely be solved. But the period and frequency of fasting neither decide one's rank of faith nor become a standard forced equally on every believer.

When the hypocrites fasted, they put on sad countenances and disfigured their faces. They deliberately changed their usual appearance so that others would notice their pain and religious zeal. They wanted people to recognize, comfort, and exalt them, saying how godly and earnest they were. With their mouths they sought God, but in reality they sought the eyes and the glory of men.

The words *"they have their reward"* mean that with the praise of men they wanted, their reward is complete. If they

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tried to exalt their own names through fasting, men's admiration is their reward. However much it was packaged as being for God, if its center was self-boasting, there is no reward to receive from God, who sees in secret.

The words *"anoint your head and wash your face"* do not mean to lie in order to hide the fact of fasting. They mean to keep the ordinary neatness of daily life and not to stage a deliberately haggard and sorrowful look. Even while fasting we should live tidily as usual and not needlessly display our pain, so that the gaze of prayer is set on God alone.

The fact that a fast becomes known is not itself hypocrisy. If a church fasts together over a common prayer topic, the participants may know of one another's fasting. It may also be necessary to inform one's family and those in charge because of health or schedule. What matters is not whether people know or not, but whether it is done with the aim of being recognized by men, or in the faith that seeks God's help and desires to accomplish His will.

The words *"but to your Father who is in the secret place"* reveal that the true object of fasting is God. The believer does not need to prove his earnestness to people. Even if no one recognizes the labor, God knows the hunger, the prayer, and the center of the heart. Therefore we must not be discouraged or boast according to people's reactions, but believe that God hears and will answer in the most fitting way.

The word that God repays is not a promise of trade that He will surely produce the desired result in proportion to the hours fasted. Fasting is not a means of bending God's will to man's will. God hears prayer, yet He answers according to His own wisdom and will; sometimes He changes the circumstances, and sometimes He corrects the thoughts of the one praying. The fasting of faith entrusts even the manner of the answer to God.

Fasting is neither a merit that earns the remission of sins nor an act that pays the penalty of sin in one's place. However long a person goes hungry and afflicts his body, he cannot wash away the hypocrisy, pride, and greed within his heart. If he leans on the fact of having fasted much and counts himself holier, his own righteousness only grows. A person becomes righteous not by the merit of fasting but by believing the salvation God has accomplished.

Jesus came to save all sinners, including those who commit the sin of dressing up religious acts to be seen by men. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore all the sins of mankind, including hypocrisy and self-boasting, unbelief and greed. The sinless Son of God accepted the responsibility of sinners into His own body and became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

After being passed the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus received in their place the judgment of those sins on the Cross. He shed His blood and died, was buried, and rose again on the third day, defeating sin and death. Thus He accomplished the complete remission of sin and the eternal life that a sinner can never achieve by fasting or good deeds.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching to wash away one's sins by fasting. It is the gospel that believes the fact that Jesus bore all the sins of believers through the baptism He received from John and completely ended the judgment of sin by the Cross and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of sins not by the merit of fasting but by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and becomes righteous before God.

On the person born again by believing that Jesus was passed all sins through the baptism He received from John the

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Baptist, the Holy Spirit comes. He does not fast to wash away sin or to look godly before men. Because he has already become God's child, he fasts to seek the Father's help and to concentrate his heart more fully on the kingdom of God and the work of the gospel. Fasting is not a condition of salvation but one way in which the saved righteous offer prayer and devotion in faith.

If there is only the act of not eating and no prayer offered to God, it cannot be called spiritual fasting. During a fast we should reduce the attention usually given to food and daily affairs, meditate on the word, and make our prayer topics clear. We should pray concretely for the expansion of the kingdom of God, the preaching of the gospel, the church and its workers, the souls who must be saved, the brothers who are in temptation, and our own faith.

Fasting must also not become an excuse for neglecting other responsibilities. Even while fasting we must care for our duties and our family, and those for whom fasting is dangerous—because of a weak body, illness, or medication—must consider their state of health. God does not count recklessly harming the body as faith. Depending on the situation, one may also choose the way of restraining the amount or kind of food while concentrating on prayer.

The person who has fasted must not judge those who have not fasted as lacking faith. One person may be able to fast long, and another may not. What God sees is not a competition of duration but faith and purpose. If after fasting one boasts of his own sacrifice, or resents God because the desired answer did not come at once, he has lost the true meaning of fasting.

The life of the born-again righteous must have a clear purpose. After receiving salvation we are not to live again only for the comfort of our flesh and the glory of the world; we must

count precious the work of other souls hearing the gospel and of the kingdom of God expanding. Fasting can be a time of laying down one's desires for a moment, setting up again in the heart what is truly important, and asking for strength for the purpose God has entrusted.

Even a believer may find a desire arising to be recognized by men while he fasts. At such times he must not hide or rationalize his motive but receive the rebuke of the Holy Spirit and turn back. Withdrawing his gaze from people's evaluation, he must look to the gospel that saved him completely, and set his heart again and pray for God's will and the salvation of souls.

Matthew 6:16–18 asks where the heart of fasting is directed rather than its outward form. The hypocrite seeks the praise of men with a sorrowful face and already receives his reward in that praise. But the righteous who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not seek the glory of men but earnestly ask help of God, who sees in secret. They do not gain salvation or build their own righteousness by fasting; in gratitude for the salvation already received, they restrain themselves and pray for the kingdom of God and the work of the gospel. God sees that faith and that center and, according to His good will, surely rewards them fittingly.

Jesus told us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, not the treasures of the earth

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither

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moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 'The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 'No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 'Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 'So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 'Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:19–34).

Treasures laid up on earth are not eternal. Moths ruin clothes and grain, rust corrodes metal, and riches can be lost to thieves, disasters, and death. Jesus did not forbid the act itself

of owning property or saving for one's living. He warned against the life that makes perishable riches the highest value and security of life and hoards them only for oneself.

To lay up treasures in heaven does not mean moving money up to heaven. It is using the material things, time, and talents received from God for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel, for the salvation of souls, and for the church. The labor of helping the poor, serving the gospel, and acting in faith may seem to vanish in this world, but God remembers it, and it remains as eternal fruit and reward.

The words *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* mean that what a person counts most precious decides the direction of his heart and life. If he counts riches the highest treasure, his thoughts, time, and worries are all captured by riches. But the heart of the person who believes God and the gospel to be the true treasure turns toward the kingdom of God, and he comes to use what he has to accomplish that will.

The words about the good eye and the bad eye are also connected with the spiritual sight that looks at life. When we see the righteousness of God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and discern what is eternally valuable, the direction of our whole life brightens. But if we count only the world's wealth and pleasure as treasure, then even while claiming to know the gospel, our heart and life come under the rule of dark desire.

Just as one person cannot serve two masters, we cannot serve God and riches as masters at the same time. Riches are a necessary tool, but when they become the object of service they rule a person's decisions and conscience. The believer may earn and manage money, but he must not abandon the truth or sacrifice the gospel and his brothers in order to gain

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money. We must not serve riches as master but use them as what God has entrusted to us.

But man cannot escape greed and worry by his own strength. When riches increase, he worries that he may lose them; when they are few, he fears that there may be no way to live. Because he believes he must be responsible for his own life, he heaps up what is visible and is still not satisfied. This unbelief and greed are also sin before God and cannot be washed away by human effort and good deeds.

Jesus came to save the sinners who loved riches more than God, worried about the future, and lived only for themselves. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore all the sins of mankind, including greed and unbelief. The sinless Son of God accepted the responsibility of sinners into His own body and became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

After being passed the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus received in their place the judgment of those sins on the Cross. He shed His blood and died, was buried, and rose again on the third day, defeating sin and death. Thus He accomplished the complete remission of sin and the eternal life that riches or human merit can never buy.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching that one must throw away all possessions to be saved. It is the gospel that believes the fact that Jesus bore all the sins of believers through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation by the Cross and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of sins not by his possessions or good deeds but by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and becomes a child of God.

On the person born again by believing that Jesus was

passed all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit comes. Since he has already received eternal life and the kingdom of God, he does not make perishable riches the master of his life. Following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he uses what has been entrusted to him for the gospel and for souls, living the life of laying up treasures in heaven.

Through the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, Jesus taught the care of God the Father. It does not mean that the birds do nothing; it means that the One who ultimately supplies life and food is God. God, who clothes even the grass of the field, does not fail to know or ignore the needs of the children He saved by giving His only begotten Son.

Therefore the words *"do not worry"* do not mean to make no plans and do no work. The believer must do his work faithfully and make the necessary preparations. Only, he must not be gripped by fear, endlessly imagining things that have not yet come. Worry cannot add a single cubit to one's stature and only takes away the faith and strength needed for today.

The words *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"* are the conclusion of this passage. The kingdom of God appears where people who have received the remission of sins through the gospel arise and salvation spreads widely through the church. The righteousness of God is the righteousness of the complete salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ, and believing and preaching that righteousness is the life that seeks the kingdom and the righteousness of God.

These words do not mean to abandon one's livelihood irresponsibly and then demand everything from God. They mean not to set the first purpose of life on one's own comfort and wealth but on the kingdom of God and the gospel. When the saved righteous person thinks first of the preaching of the

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gospel and the work of the church and serves in faith, God knows what his body and soul need and supplies it in His own way.

The words *"Sufficient for the day is its own trouble"* mean to bear in faith the responsibilities and hardships given today. We should not shoulder in advance today all the possibilities of tomorrow, but ask God for the wisdom and the bread needed today. Whenever worry arises, the believer must trust the Father's care and the promise of the gospel, do his own work faithfully, and entrust the results to God.

Matthew 6:19–34 shows that a person's treasure, gaze, master, and worries are all connected. The righteous saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not make earthly riches their eternal treasure or master but count the kingdom of God and the gospel most precious. Because they believe the promise that God knows and cares for the needs of His children, they are not bound by tomorrow's worries; doing the work entrusted today, they seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The material things, time, and labor used in faith like this do not vanish but remain as treasures in heaven. ✉

Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 6

[Question] 1. What is the central content of Matthew chapter 6?

Matthew chapter 6, as the second part of the Sermon on the Mount, teaches that the children of God must not chase the recognition of men and the riches of the world but must lead a life of faith that believes in God the Father and seeks first His kingdom and His righteousness. The center of this chapter is the center of the heart directed toward God rather than the outward form of faith, and it teaches that everything—from charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting to material things and the worries of daily life—must be done in faith before God.

In verses 1–4, Jesus told us not to practice our righteousness to be seen by men. If, when giving to the poor, a person displays his own good deeds to gain praise and glory from men, he has already received his reward from men, so there is no reward for him to receive from God. Therefore the children of God must not boast of their own righteousness, but must do in secret every good deed that helps people in need and the work of the gospel, so that God may be pleased.

In verses 5–8, He taught us not to pray to be seen by men like the hypocrites, but to go into our room and pray to God the Father, who is in the secret place. Nor should we use vain repetitions, thinking that God hears us only when we repeat many words. Since God knows what we need even before we ask, prayer is not a religious act for looking godly before men

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but the communion of faith in which we believe and depend on God and pour out our hearts to Him.

In verses 9–13 is recorded the content of the prayer Jesus taught. The children of God must first pray that God's name be hallowed, that God's kingdom come, and that God's will be done on earth as well. Then we must ask for our daily bread, forgive one another's wrongs, and ask not to fall into temptation but to be delivered from evil. This prayer shows that we must not put only our fleshly needs first but must think first of the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel.

In verses 14 and 15, He told us to forgive the trespasses of others. This does not mean that we obtain salvation by the act of forgiving people. It means that the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been remitted of all his sins by God's great mercy must live forgiving the shortcomings and wrongs of others as well. If we keep harboring a brother's trespasses in our hearts and condemning him, difficulties also arise in our fellowship with God and in our life of faith, so the saints must remember the grace they have received and forgive one another.

In verses 16–18, He told us not to put on a sad face or display our fasting to people when we fast. Fasting is not an asceticism for winning recognition from people as godly, nor does fasting itself wash away sin or make one righteous. Since it is restraining the desires of the flesh in order to pray to God and seek His will, it must be done looking to God, who sees in secret, not to the praise of men.

In verses 19–21, Jesus told us not to lay up treasures on earth but to lay them up in heaven. Earthly riches can be ruined by moth and rust and taken away by thieves, but what has been used for the gospel and the kingdom of God never disappears. Laying up treasures in heaven does not mean buying heaven

with riches; it means using the time, material things, talents, and life entrusted by God for the salvation of souls and the preaching of the gospel. Since a person's heart follows the place where his treasure is, the saints must set their hearts not on the world but on the kingdom of God.

The words in verses 22 and 23 that the eye is the lamp of the body show that the gaze of the heart and the direction of faith are important. If the eyes of the heart look at the word of God and the gospel, the whole life becomes bright, but if they look only at riches and fleshly desires, the heart becomes dark. Therefore the saints must not let their hearts be captured only by their own circumstances and the things of the world, but must look at the salvation God has accomplished and the purpose of preaching the gospel.

In verse 24, He said that no one can serve two masters and that we cannot serve God and riches together. Riches are necessary for life, but they must not become the master of our faith. Using money for God's will and the gospel is entirely different from serving money as the master of one's life. The children of God must count God more precious than riches and worldly success, and live as stewards who use what God has entrusted to them for the gospel.

In verses 25–32, Jesus told us not to worry about what to eat and drink and what to put on. He taught that God, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, will surely care for His children, who are more precious than they. This does not mean that we should not work or prepare; it means that we must not lose the purpose of life by worrying excessively over the needs of the flesh without trusting God. God the Father already knows what His children need.

Verses 33 and 34 can be called the conclusion and the center of Matthew chapter 6. The children of God must seek

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first the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God. To seek the kingdom of God is to desire that the gospel be preached so that sinners are saved and God's rule is widened, and to serve that work; and to seek the righteousness of God is to believe and preach the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished. When we seek first the kingdom and the righteousness of God like this, God also adds what is needed for our lives. Therefore we must not worry in advance about tomorrow, but faithfully live the life of faith entrusted to us today.

All these teachings do not mean that a person obtains the remission of sins through charitable deeds, prayer, fasting, and good works. Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John; bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, bearing the judgment; and by rising from death He completed salvation. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit can call God Father and live looking to God, not to the praise of men.

Therefore the center of Matthew chapter 6 lies in this: the child of God who has received the remission of sins casts away hypocrisy, the greed for riches, and the worries of the world, does all his charity, prayer, fasting, and material living before God, and above all seeks first the kingdom and the righteousness of God. The true life of faith is not a life of displaying oneself to people, but of believing in the salvation God has accomplished and offering one's life for His will and the preaching of the gospel.

[Question] 2. What attitude in practicing righteousness do the words of Matthew 6:1, *"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them,"* warn against?

These words warn against the hypocritical attitude of doing righteous deeds while displaying oneself to people to gain praise, respect, and glory. If a person outwardly seems to help others and serve God, but the purpose of his heart lies in exalting his own name and righteousness rather than God's will, it is not the true righteousness that pleases God.

The person who practices righteousness to be seen by men publicizes his good deeds and tries to be evaluated by others as a godly and admirable believer. Because he counts the recognition and praise of men more precious than the reward he would receive from God, he has already received his reward by being praised by men.

Yet this does not mean that good deeds must always be done without anyone knowing, or that they are all wrong the moment they become known to others. What matters is the motive and purpose of the heart in doing righteousness. Even if others see it, if it is done not to exalt oneself but to accomplish God's will and to benefit the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls, it is a work of faith directed toward God.

Nor should one try to wash away his sins or earn the qualification of salvation by practicing righteousness. The saved saint is a person who has already received the righteousness of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so he must do good not to display his own righteousness but in gratitude to God who saved him.

Therefore, the attitude Jesus warned against is the hypocrisy that makes good deeds a means of self-boasting and

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honor. The children of God must not seek the eyes and praise of men, but must look to God, who sees everything even in secret, and do good works for His kingdom and His righteousness.

[Question] 3. According to Matthew 6:2, what is the purpose of the hypocrite who sounds a trumpet when he does a charitable deed?

The purpose of the hypocrite who sounds a trumpet when he does a charitable deed is to publicize his good deed widely and to gain praise, respect, and glory from people. They counted looking merciful and godly more important than sincerely helping the poor or accomplishing the will of God.

To ‘sound a trumpet’ expresses the attitude of showing off and advertising one’s charity to many people. The hypocrites gave in places where many people could see, such as the synagogues and the streets, displaying their good deeds to receive people’s attention and praise.

But such a person has already received his reward by being praised by men, so there is no reward for him to receive from God. The saved saint must give not to exalt his own name and righteousness, but for the will that pleases God and for the good of other souls.

[Question] 4. What kind of charity do the words of Matthew 6:3–4, *"do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,"* and *"that your charitable deed may be in secret,"* require?

These words require charity done before God, without revealing or boasting of one's good deeds to others and without expecting the praise and reward of men. We must not exalt our own name and righteousness by patronizing the person who received help or by making it known to those around us.

The words *"do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing"* do not mean that we must literally be unable to remember the charity we have done. They are an emphatic expression telling us not to be so conscious of our good deeds as to boast of them, and not to seek the recognition and praise of others. Nor should we consider that we have done something great and store it up in our hearts as merit.

Also, that a charitable deed *"may be in secret"* is not limited to meaning that charity must be done only in a place where no one can see. It means that even if others come to know of it, the purpose of the heart must lie not in displaying oneself but in serving God, helping people in need, and benefiting the salvation of souls and the preaching of the gospel.

Therefore, the charity Jesus requires is not charity for one's own righteousness and honor but charity done with love and mercy in gratitude for the grace received from God. Even if it is not known to people or repaid, it must be done in the faith that God, who sees in secret, knows and repays.

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[Question] 5. Explain the manner and purpose of the hypocrites' prayer shown in Matthew 6:5.

The hypocrites loved to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets. They chose places where many people gathered and passed by, and by displaying their praying appearance they tried to look like godly people of great faith.

The purpose of their prayer did not lie in pouring out their hearts to God and seeking His will. It lay in gaining praise, respect, and glory by showing off their godliness and religious zeal to people. Outwardly they seemed to pray to God, but in reality it was a hypocritical act conscious of people's eyes and evaluation.

Jesus did not forbid every prayer offered in the synagogue or where many people are. The public prayers the saints offer together are also necessary. Nor is the posture of standing in prayer itself wrong. The problem is not the place or the posture but the heart and purpose of the person praying.

Prayer meant to be seen by men has already received its reward in the praise of men, so there is no reward to receive from God. True prayer must be, not words for displaying oneself to people, but communion that looks only to God and seeks His will and His help in faith.

[Question] 6. According to Matthew 6:6, where and with what heart did Jesus tell us to pray?

Jesus told us, when we pray, to go into our room, shut the door, and pray to God the Father, who is in the secret place. This means to pray truthfully in a place where we can escape

the eyes of men and concentrate our hearts on God.

To pray in the inner room does not mean that all prayer must be offered only inside a particular room. The public prayers the saints offer together are also necessary, but it means that we must throw away the heart that wants people to hear us or that boasts of its godliness, and pray as though facing God alone.

Therefore, when we pray, we must not seek the praise and recognition of men, but have the faith that God knows all our circumstances and needs and hears our prayer. Rather than trying to accomplish only our own desires, we should ask that God's kingdom and will be done, and honestly tell Him our shortcomings and the help we need.

God, who sees in secret, hears such prayers of faith, answers them, and rewards them. Therefore the prayer Jesus taught is prayer offered with a true heart and faith that looks only to God, rather than with the form of a place.

[Question] 7. How does Matthew 6:7 describe the wrong way the heathen pray?

Verse 7 describes the heathen as using vain repetitions when they pray thinking that God would hear their prayers only if they used many words. They tried to obtain answers by repeating the same words and incantations meaninglessly or by stringing out long and many words.

Prayer of vain repetitions is not prayer that believes God and pours out the heart to Him; it is prayer that thinks power resides in the quantity of repeated words and in the religious form itself. This is a wrong attitude that tries to move God or push through one's own demands with many words rather than

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knowing and depending on God personally.

These words do not mean that praying earnestly several times over the same matter or praying long is itself forbidden. What matters is not the number of repetitions or the length of the prayer but faith and a true heart. What is wrong is repeating phrases habitually without even thinking of their meaning, or believing that one is answered only by speaking many words.

The children of God must believe that God the Father already knows their circumstances and needs. Therefore, rather than trying to persuade people or God with splendid and lengthy words, we must seek first the kingdom and the will of God and tell Him honestly and plainly what we need.

[Question] 8. What reason does Matthew 6:8 give for not imitating the way the heathen pray?

The reason we must not imitate the way the heathen pray is that God the Father already knows what we need before we ask Him. Therefore we must not think that God understands our circumstances or hears our prayer only when we repeat many words.

God is not One who understands our situation only when we explain it in detail, as people do. He knows all our living circumstances, the desires and weaknesses of our hearts, and even the needs we have not yet put into words. Therefore the children of God must not try to persuade God with many words and repeated phrases, but must pray in the faith that God knows and cares for them.

This does not mean, however, that since God knows all our needs there is no need to pray. Prayer is not informing God of new information but believing in God as Father, depending on

Him, and having fellowship with Him. It is also the act of not insisting on our own will but seeking first the kingdom and the will of God and entrusting to Him in faith the help we need.

Therefore the saints must not depend on the quantity or repetition of words, but must pray truthfully and plainly, believing in the love and faithfulness of God the Father, who already knows their needs.

[Question] 9. Explain why Jesus said in Matthew 6:9, *"In this manner, therefore, pray."*

Jesus said, *"In this manner, therefore, pray,"* in order to teach the children of God to whom, for what, and in what order they should pray, without following the wrong prayers of the hypocrites and the heathen.

The hypocrites prayed to be seen by men, and the heathen thought they would be answered only by repeating many words. But true prayer is not an act of gaining the praise of men or moving God with many words. It is the communion of faith that believes in and depends on God as Father and unites one's heart to His will.

The prayer Jesus taught is composed so that we first seek God's name, kingdom, and will, and then ask for daily bread, the remission of sins, and deliverance from temptation and evil. This means that the center of prayer must not lie only in one's own greed and the needs of the flesh, but must think first of the glory of God, the preaching of the gospel, and the work of the kingdom of God.

Also, praying *"Our Father in heaven"* shows that the relationship of father and child has been established between God and the person who prays. A person must pray, not merely

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calling God Father as a religious formality, but with the faith of one who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, received the Holy Spirit as a gift, and become a child of God.

Therefore these words do not mean to repeat the sentences of the Lord's Prayer thoughtlessly; He taught the model and order of right prayer—believing in God as Father, seeking first His glory, His kingdom, and His will, and then entrusting our needs to Him in faith.

[Question] 10. Organize the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13, dividing it according to its objects and themes.

The Lord's Prayer can be divided into the opening that calls upon God, three petitions for God, three petitions for the children of God, and the doxology that gives glory to God.

Category	Object	Theme	Meaning
Opening	God the Father	Our Father in heaven	Those who have received the remission of sins and become God's children believe in God and call Him Father.
First petition	The name of God	That God's name be hallowed	They ask that God's holiness and salvation be revealed as the saints believe, keep, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Category	Object	Theme	Meaning
Second petition	The kingdom of God	That God's kingdom come	They ask that the gospel be preached so that sinners are saved and come under God's rule, and that the eternal kingdom of God be completed in the days to come.
Third petition	The will of God	That God's will be done on earth as well	They ask that God's plan of salvation appointed in heaven and His will for the preaching of the gospel be accomplished through this world and the lives of the saints.
Fourth petition	Our living	Daily bread	They ask for the bodily food and the spiritual food of the word needed to carry on each day's life and the work of the gospel.
Fifth petition	Our sins and relationships	The remission of sins and forgiveness toward others	Believing in the grace of the remission of sins already received, they acknowledge their shortcomings before God and ask to forgive also the trespasses of those who have wronged them.
Sixth petition	Our soul and faith	Protection from temptation and evil	They ask to keep the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, without falling into the lusts of the flesh, the temptations of the world, and the deception of Satan the devil.

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Category	Object	Theme	Meaning
Doxology	God the Father	The kingdom, the power, and the glory	They believe and confess that all the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to God forever.

The first three petitions are for God's name, kingdom, and will—prayer centered on God. The children of God must pray first that God's name be exalted, that the gospel be preached so that God's kingdom expands, and that God's will be done, rather than seeking their own needs first.

The latter three petitions are prayers for what the children of God need. Daily bread is a petition for the provision needed for the life of the body; the remission of sins received from God and forgiveness between people are for right fellowship with God and with others; and protection from temptation and evil is a petition for the safety of faith and soul. Thus the Lord's Prayer includes both body and soul, the present life and eternal salvation.

The Lord's Prayer also uses the expression 'our,' not 'my.' This shows that it is not a private prayer only for one's own needs but a communal prayer that thinks together of the church, the saints, and the souls not yet saved.

Therefore the Lord's Prayer is structured to seek first the three themes for God, then to ask for the three needs of the children of God, and finally to give all the kingdom and the power and the glory to God. This shows the right order of prayer: the children of God must seek His kingdom and His righteousness before their own desires.

[Question] 11. Explain the structure and characteristics of the Lord's Prayer recorded in Matthew 6:9–13.

The Lord's Prayer is composed of the opening that calls upon God, six petitions, and the doxology that gives glory to God. The first three petitions are for God's name, kingdom, and will, and the latter three petitions are for the bread, the remission of sins, and the spiritual protection that the children of God need.

First, the prayer begins with the address *"Our Father in heaven."* This shows that the One to whom we pray is God, who rules heaven and earth, and that between the person praying and God there is the relationship of father and child. The person who can truly call God Father is the one who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, received the Holy Spirit as a gift, and become a child of God.

The first petition asks that God's name be hallowed. This is the prayer that, as the saints believe, keep, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God's salvation and holiness may be revealed to the world and all the glory may return to God.

The second petition asks that God's kingdom come. This asks that the gospel of the water and the Spirit be preached to the world so that sinners receive the remission of sins and become God's people, and that God's rule be accomplished in their hearts and lives. It is also the prayer that hopes for Jesus Christ to come again and complete the eternal kingdom of God.

The third petition asks that God's will be done on earth as it has been done in heaven. God's most important will is that sinners be saved and that the gospel be preached to the whole

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world. Therefore the saints must not pray only that their own plans and desires be accomplished, but must ask that God's plan of salvation and His will for the preaching of the gospel be accomplished through their lives.

The fourth petition asks for the daily bread needed today. God knows not only the spiritual needs of His children but also the needs of the body—eating, drinking, and living. The saints should not ask for many riches out of greed, but should ask God in faith for what is needed to carry on that day's life and the work of the gospel. The word of God that gives life to the soul and strengthens faith is also spiritual food to be received daily.

The fifth petition asks that our sins be remitted as we have forgiven the sins and trespasses of others. This does not mean that salvation must be obtained again through repeated prayers of repentance. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has already been remitted of all the sins of his lifetime. Only, while living on this earth, he must acknowledge before God the shortcomings that appear, believe again the gospel that washed away all his sins, and, according to the mercy he has received, forgive the trespasses of others as well.

The sixth petition asks not to fall into temptation but to be delivered from evil. The saints must ask for God's protection and guidance so as not to fall into the lusts of the flesh, the temptations of the world, and the deception of Satan the devil. In particular, we must pray not to depart from faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and follow false gospels and worldly desires, and ask to be kept from evil thoughts, people, and circumstances.

The final doxology confesses that the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to God the Father forever. This is

the confession of faith that the answer to prayer and the accomplishment of all things depend not on human ability but on God's sovereignty and power, and that all results and glory must also be given to God.

The first characteristic of the Lord's Prayer is that the petitions for God come before the petitions for human needs. The second characteristic is that by praying 'our' rather than 'my,' it is a communal prayer that asks together for the needs of the church and other souls, not only of the individual. The third characteristic is that it contains everything needed for faith and life—from God's glory and kingdom to daily bread, the remission of sins, and spiritual protection—concisely yet completely.

Therefore the Lord's Prayer is not a spell to be repeated thoughtlessly but the model of prayer that shows with what faith, in what order, and for what purpose the children of God should pray. The saints must pray seeking first God's name, kingdom, and will, entrusting their needs to God, and living lives that keep and preach the gospel.

[Question] 12. Explain the meaning of the words *"Our Father in heaven"* in Matthew 6:9.

The words *"in heaven"* show that God is not like the creatures of this world but is the Absolute Being who rules the whole universe with holiness and power. God is not confined to a particular place; He is everywhere, and He sees and knows even prayers offered in secret and the hearts of men.

The words *"Our Father"* mean that the relationship of father and child has been established between the person praying and God. God is the Creator who made all people, but

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not everyone can automatically call God the Father of his salvation. Only the person born again as God's child can come to God and call Him Father, without the fear of sin and judgment.

Becoming a child of God is not accomplished by good deeds and religious zeal. Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist; bearing those sins, He was crucified and died shedding His blood, bearing the judgment of sin; and by rising from death He completed salvation. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, is remitted of all sins, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift becomes a child of God and can call God Father.

Also, He said *"Our Father,"* not 'my Father,' because prayer is not only for oneself. All the saints who have received the remission of sins are a family of faith who serve the one God as Father. Therefore, when we pray, we must think not only of our own needs but also of the church, our brothers and sisters, the preaching of the gospel, and the salvation of other souls.

Therefore, in the address *"Our Father in heaven"* two beliefs are contained together: God is the holy and almighty One who rules heaven and earth, and so we must revere Him; and at the same time He is the Father who saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so we can come to Him boldly with love and trust. This is the right faith the children of God must have when they begin to pray.

[Question] 13. In Matthew 6:9, how do the Scriptures reveal the name of God?

In the Scriptures, the name of God does not mean merely one title by which God is called. It reveals God's being, character, power, and glory, and all the works God has done. Therefore one's attitude toward the name of God is the same as one's attitude toward God Himself.

The Scriptures reveal God as the LORD God, who exists of Himself and never changes forever. God is the Creator who made the whole universe and mankind, and the Absolute Being who governs all life and history. He is also the faithful God who surely fulfills the words He has promised and cares for His people.

The name of God is a holy and glorious name. In God there is no sin, falsehood, or unrighteousness at all, and everything He does is righteous and good. Therefore man must not use the name of God for his own greed and falsehood or call upon it lightly and in vain, but must exalt it with faith and reverence.

The Scriptures also reveal God as the God of salvation who saves sinners. God accomplished the gospel of the water and the Spirit through Jesus Christ and became the Father of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel. Therefore, to the born-again saint, the name of God is not only the name of a fearful Judge but the name of the holy Father who saved him and cares for him.

Therefore the name of God in verse 9 reveals God's holy being and character, the power of the Creator, the grace of salvation, and His Fatherhood all together. The children of God must believe in and exalt this name, and give glory to the name of God through their faith and their lives of preaching the gospel.

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[Question] 14. In Matthew 6:9, what does it mean to hallow the name of God?

To hallow the name of God does not mean that man makes the inherently holy God more holy. It means believing in and exalting with the heart God's holiness and the grace of His salvation, and letting God's name be revealed gloriously to people through that faith and life.

Above all, to hallow the name of God we must believe the way of salvation God accomplished just as it is. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus received all the sins mankind commits from Adam to the last day of the world passed on to His own body. And bearing those sins, He was crucified and died shedding His blood, bearing the judgment of sin, and by rising from death He completed salvation.

The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is remitted of all sins and becomes a holy righteous person, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift and becomes a child of God. Believing the fact that God has completely removed all one's sins and serving God as the holy Father is the starting point of the faith that hallows God's name. Conversely, if one does not believe the salvation God accomplished and tries to wash away his sins with his own deeds and repeated prayers of repentance, he does not acknowledge God's perfect salvation.

Even when the shortcomings and wrongs of the flesh appear after receiving the remission of sins, we must not condemn ourselves as sinners again. We must acknowledge our wrongs before the word of God, yet believe that even those sins were already passed on to Jesus and judged on the Cross. Brightening one's conscience again with the gospel of the water and the Spirit like this, giving thanks to God, and

keeping the faith is the life that gives holiness to the Father's name.

Furthermore, the children of God must not stop at exalting God's name only with their lips, but must keep and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Delivering to sinners the righteousness God has accomplished, so that they too receive the remission of sins and become God's children, is the work that reveals God's name most gloriously to the world.

Therefore, to hallow the name of God is not to boast of human ethical perfection but to believe fully the salvation God accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and to keep and preach that faith. And it is to revere God worthily of that faith, and to live for the gospel and the salvation of souls, so that God's name is exalted through one's life.

[Question] 15. What does the petition *"Your kingdom come"* in Matthew 6:10 mean?

The petition *"Your kingdom come"* is a prayer asking that the kingdom of God be established on this earth and be built ever more widely. The kingdom of God does not mean a worldly territory or a political nation; it means the spiritual kingdom where God is King and rules with His truth and His will.

First, the kingdom of God comes into a person's heart when a sinner believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins. When a sinner believes the gospel, is washed of all his sins, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, he becomes one of God's people, and his heart becomes a holy kingdom ruled by God. Therefore in this petition is

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contained the desire that souls still in sin may hear the true gospel, be saved, and become God's children.

This prayer also asks that the gospel of the water and the Spirit be preached to the whole world, that God's churches be established in every nation and region, and that workers arise to serve the gospel. As those who hear the gospel receive the remission of sins and become God's people, the kingdom of God expands on this earth. Therefore the saved saints must not pray only with words that God's kingdom may come, but must participate in the preaching of the gospel with prayer, material things, and labor.

This does not mean conquering the nations of the world by force or making a human religious organization great. The kingdom of God is not built by human power and might; it is built as the gospel of truth is preached and sinners are saved by faith. God first makes the saved righteous the workers of Christ, and through them He finds the lost souls and makes them God's people.

In this petition there is also the meaning of waiting for the kingdom of God that is to come. When Jesus Christ comes again, He will judge Satan and all evil, establish the kingdom where the righteous reign with the Lord, and finally complete the eternal kingdom of God. Therefore the prayer *"Your kingdom come"* asks that God's kingdom be widened through the gospel on this earth now, and at the same time hopes for the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal kingdom that the Lord will complete.

Therefore the person who offers this petition does not seek only his own profit and comfort but desires that God's kingdom be established first. He must pray that even one soul may be saved through him and that God's church and the workers of the gospel may be raised up, and he must participate

by faith in the mission of preaching the gospel that God has entrusted.

[Question] 16. What does the petition in Matthew 6:10, *"Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven,"* mean?

This petition is a prayer asking that the will God planned and appointed in heaven be fully accomplished on this earth as well. The will of God spoken of here is not the accomplishment of the worldly wishes or plans that man desires; it refers to God's will to save sinners, make them His people, and establish the kingdom of God on this earth.

God the Father planned before the foundation of the world to save mankind from sin in Jesus Christ. According to that will, Jesus came to this earth and received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist; bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, and He rose from the dead. Thus the will of God's salvation planned in heaven was accomplished on this earth through the obedience of Jesus Christ.

Now God desires that the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit be preached to the whole world so that people receive the remission of sins and become His people. That God's churches be established in every nation and region, that workers arise to preach the gospel, and that souls bound in sin believe the gospel and be saved—this is God's will being done on this earth. Therefore this petition is also a prayer asking Him to help the kingdom of God keep expanding through the preaching of the gospel.

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This prayer also carries the meaning of asking that the saved saint may live obeying God's will without putting forward his own thoughts and fleshly desires. We must not claim to seek God's will while trying to push our own plans through to God. We must first discern His will through the word of God, receive the guidance of the church, and serve the gospel in the place entrusted to us.

Therefore the person who offers this petition must not stop at praying with words that God's will be done. When God desires to use his time, material things, and labor for the preaching of the gospel, he must obey in faith. Asking God for help and strength and participating step by step in His work is the life worthy of this prayer.

Ultimately, this petition is a prayer hoping for the day when Jesus Christ comes again, judges evil, establishes the kingdom He promised, and finally accomplishes God's will perfectly in the new heavens and the new earth. Therefore these words mean to ask that God's plan of salvation appointed in heaven be accomplished on this earth now through the gospel and the church, and be perfectly completed when Christ comes again.

[Question] 17. Explain the content and meaning of the fourth petition recorded in Matthew 6:11.

The fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer is the words *"Give us this day our daily bread."* If the first three petitions are for God's name, kingdom, and will, from the fourth petition onward the content asks for what the children of God living on this earth need.

The *"daily bread"* refers first to the needs of the body—the food, clothing, shelter, health, workplace, and material things

needed to live each day. People easily think they live by their own strength and effort alone, but the ability to work, health, the needed circumstances, and income can all be obtained only when God grants them. Therefore this petition is a prayer of faith that entrusts each day's life to God and asks Him to supply what is needed.

But the daily bread is not limited to the food of the body. The word of God and faith, the wisdom to discern God's will and the strength to do it, are also food the soul must eat every day. Even the righteous who have received the remission of sins must keep hearing the word, ruminating on the gospel, and serving God's work to gain faith and new strength in their hearts. Holding fast to the word of God and doing His work is itself the food that fills the soul.

Therefore in this petition is also contained the meaning: "Give us the word today also, increase our faith, and grant us the strength to do righteousness and a place of work to serve the gospel." The saint must not think that if he only has plenty of material things there is no need to ask for daily bread. Even a person with abundant food needs the food of the soul, faith, health, and God's help every day.

Also, Jesus had us pray for bread to be given to *"us,"* not 'me.' This means that we should look after not only our own needs but also what the church, the workers of the gospel, our brothers and sisters, and our neighbors in hardship need, and pray for them together. The bread God gives is not to be stored up only for oneself but to be shared with others and used for the preaching of the gospel.

Therefore the fourth petition is a prayer that we may believe the fact that God knows and fills today's needs of both body and soul, and that we may cast away worry and greed and depend on Him. At the same time, it is a petition that we may

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receive the word, faith, and strength God gives, and daily do God's will and serve the gospel.

[Question] 18. In Matthew 6:12, what relationship does our forgiving others have with God's remission of sins?

Verse 12 says, *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."* This petition does not mean that we receive the remission of sins from God as the merit of having forgiven others. God's remission of sin is not given as the price of man's good deeds or forgiveness; it is grace received by believing in the righteousness of salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished.

Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John; bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and He rose from the dead. God remits completely the lifetime sins of the person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and remembers them no more. Therefore it is not that God removes our sins only after we first forgive others.

Rather, these words mean that the person who has received such a great and complete remission of sin from God must live forgiving the faults and wrongs of others as well. If someone has been released from a debt of sin he could never repay, yet holds on to a brother's small fault and hates him, this is an attitude that has forgotten the mercy and grace of God he received. The person who has the faith that he has been remitted of his sins by God knows that he, too, is lacking and weak, and so he can pity and accept others.

Even among the saints, things can happen in which words and deeds wound one another or cause loss. Such personal faults must not be harbored long in the heart or stored up as grudges; we must forgive one another. To forgive does not mean calling the other person's wrong right or abandoning the truth; it means casting away revenge and hatred and entrusting the judgment of that person to God. If necessary we may correct the wrong and exhort him, but we must not hate or try to take revenge.

Not forgiving others does not cancel the eternal remission of sin received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But if one hates his brother to the end and refuses to forgive, he departs from the life worthy of a child of God, his fellowship with God is blocked, and he may receive His rebuke and discipline. His heart also becomes gripped by fleshly anger, making it hard to carry out prayer and the work of the gospel fully.

Therefore our forgiving others is not a condition for obtaining God's remission of sin but a fruit of faith that the person already remitted of all sins must show. As God pitied us and remitted all our sins, so our forgiving one another's faults and shortcomings and living in harmony is the life worthy of this petition.

[Question] 19. According to Matthew 6:12, must the person already cleansed through Christ's redemption still ask for the remission of sins daily?

The person who has already received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not need to receive a new remission of sin every day to maintain

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his salvation. Jesus Christ received all the sins we commit from birth to death passed on to His own body once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist; bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, and He rose from the dead. Therefore the redemption Christ accomplished is eternal and perfect and does not need to be repeated.

If the person who received the remission of sins became a sinner again whenever he sinned and had to receive a new remission of sin daily, the salvation of Jesus Christ could not be a perfect salvation. That would be denying the fact that the Lord bore even the sins we will commit in the future, and returning to a works-centered faith that tries to wash away sins with one's own repentance and prayers. Even if the saved person is weak and does wrong again, he is still a righteous person without sin, thanks to the eternal remission of sin Christ accomplished.

This does not mean, however, that the wrongs committed after being saved may be ignored or indulged. The saint must realize his wrongs and the evil of his flesh in the light of God's word and admit them honestly before God. And he must confirm again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that even those sins the Lord has already borne and washed away. Ruminating on the word of the gospel like this is not an act of receiving a new remission of sin but the work of cleansing the defiled conscience and heart again by believing the truth of the remission of sin already received.

The saint must acknowledge his wrongs and ask God for the strength to turn back from the wrong path and the faith not to repeat the same sin. If he has wronged someone, he should apologize; if he has caused loss, he should set it right as far as possible; and he must also forgive those who have wronged

him. Such repentance and prayer are not a condition for a sinner to become righteous again, but the process by which a child of God who is already righteous restores a right relationship and life before the Father.

Therefore the petition of verse 12 must not be understood to mean that we must newly receive the remission of sins every day. It is a prayer of acknowledging one's faults, remembering daily the grace of the Lord who has already remitted all sins, and asking that we too may forgive others and live as the righteous. What the saved person needs is not repeated remission of sin but to keep believing the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit, renewing his heart by that faith, and obeying God's will.

[Question] 20. What is the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:13, and what does it mean?

The sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer is the words *"And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one."* This is a prayer asking God to keep our faith and protect us from being drawn by Satan's temptation and the lusts of the flesh into evil.

The words *"do not lead us into temptation"* do not mean that God tempts people to sin and that we ask Him not to do such a thing. God does not tempt anyone with evil. But man's flesh is weak, and his heart holds greed, temper, and pride, so when he meets hard circumstances or conflicts with others, he can easily depart from faith and fall into wrong thoughts and actions. Satan also uses these weaknesses to tempt the saints to doubt God and the church and to drift away from the gospel.

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Therefore in this petition is contained the meaning: “When we meet hardship and temptation, keep us from losing faith, and let us hold fast to the word of God and overcome.” It is not so much a prayer for a life with no trials at all as a prayer for wisdom, faith, and strength not to surrender to trials and fall into sin and evil. The saints must not trust only their own will and ability, but must admit their weakness and always seek God’s help.

In the words *“But deliver us from the evil one,”* evil includes not only the working of Satan the devil and the sins of the world, but also the evil thoughts and actions that arise from our own flesh. It asks to be kept from the heart that would repay enemies in anger, from greed and pride, falsehood and lewdness, and from acts that harm the good of the gospel by following one’s own stubbornness. It also carries the meaning of asking to be protected from the hands of evil men and not to fall into a place of losing faith or standing against the gospel.

Even the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has not lost the weakness of the flesh. Therefore the saint must not overtrust his own strength but keep close to the word, unite with the church, and, when wrong thoughts arise in his heart, immediately ask God for help. If anger or greed has already arisen within, he must not justify it but admit it before God and pray that He rule his heart so that he does not do evil.

This petition is not only a passive prayer that God unconditionally remove every hardship. It is an active prayer that we may keep faith even in trials, choose God’s will, and live in goodness without being defeated by evil. Therefore the saints, while asking for God’s protection, must also hold fast to the word, stay awake and pray, and overcome trials with the wisdom and strength the Lord gives.

[Question] 21. Briefly explain the doxology of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:13.

The doxology of the Lord's Prayer is the words *"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."* The doxology is the part that closes the prayer praising God, and it is the confession of faith that all the petitions offered before it are accomplished by God's sovereignty and power.

That *"the kingdom"* is the Father's means that God is the true King of heaven and earth, the One who rules all creation and all history. The saints must not seek their own kingdom and glory but ask that God's kingdom be established and His will be done.

That *"the power"* is the Father's means that God has all the power to hear and answer our prayers, to drive back the forces of Satan, and to protect His people. Human ability cannot save sinners or establish the kingdom of God, but God by His own power spreads the gospel, saves souls, and keeps the saints from temptation and evil.

That *"the glory"* is the Father's means that the answers to prayer, salvation, and the results of every good work must be returned eternally to God, not to human merit or boasting. Even when a saint preaches the gospel and does God's work, the One who made that work possible is God, so all thanks and praise must be offered to Him.

The word *"forever"* is the confession that God's kingdom, power, and glory are not temporary but unchanging for all eternity. The kingdoms of the world decline and human power passes away, but God's rule, power, and glory are eternal.

The final *"Amen"* means, 'Truly it is so,' 'I believe it will be accomplished so.' It is not simply a word announcing that the prayer is over, but a confession of faith that agrees from the

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heart with all the petitions offered and believes that God will answer according to His own will. Therefore the doxology of the Lord's Prayer is the part that ends the prayer with praise, entrusting everything to God and giving the kingdom and the power and the glory to Him forever.

[Question] 22. Explain the meaning of the word *"Amen"* in Matthew 6:13.

"Amen (אָמֵן)" is a word derived from Hebrew, meaning 'truly,' 'indeed it is so,' 'I surely believe,' and 'may it be accomplished just so.' In its root is contained the meaning of being firm, faithful, and trustworthy.

Saying 'Amen' at the end of the Lord's Prayer is not a formal closing word merely announcing that the prayer has ended. It is a confession of faith that acknowledges from the heart that everything in the prayer Jesus taught is right, and that desires those petitions to be accomplished according to God's will.

"Amen" is also agreement with the fact that the kingdom and the power and the glory belong to God the Father forever. It means believing that God has the power and authority to hear the prayers of His people, and entrusting everything to Him, trusting that He will answer in the best way. Therefore the one who prays does not insist that things must be accomplished according to his own thoughts, but acknowledges that God's will and judgment are right.

Therefore 'Amen' is not a word attached habitually with the lips but the response of faith that confirms: "I believe this word. I agree with this prayer from my heart. I believe it will be done according to God's will." It must be confessed not formally,

without believing in the heart, but with the faith that trusts the word and the promises of God.

[Question] 23. According to Matthew 6:14–15, what must we do to receive the remission of sin before God?

To receive the fundamental remission of sin before God, we must first admit that we cannot keep God's Law fully and that we are beings who constantly sin in heart, thought, and deed. And we must throw away the thought of washing away our sins with our own good deeds, prayers of repentance, asceticism, and devotion, and believe in the righteousness of salvation that God accomplished through Jesus Christ.

Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John, and bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, bearing the punishment of all sins. And He rose from the dead and became our eternal Savior. God gives complete and eternal remission of sin to the person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart. Therefore the remission of sin is not obtained by the merit of forgiving others or by good deeds; it is received by believing in the salvation Jesus Christ completed.

Then what is the meaning of the words in verses 14–15 that God will forgive our trespasses only if we forgive the trespasses of others? These words do not mean that the act of forgiving people becomes the price of salvation. They mean that the person who has been remitted of all his sins by God ought also to forgive those who have wronged him. If someone has been released from a debt of sin he could never repay, yet

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holds on to another's small fault and refuses to forgive, he falls into the contradiction of denying the grace of God he received.

Here, *"their trespasses"* refers to the wrongs committed against one another through weakness and mistakes in daily life. The saints must not store up such wrongs in their hearts or harbor grudges, but must admit their own faults, apologize, and forgive one another. When the other person has done wrong, we may exhort him to set it right, but we must not hate him or try to take revenge. If we ourselves have done wrong, we must not make excuses but admit the wrong and be reconciled.

Even if a person who has already received the eternal remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not forgive others, the effect of the salvation Christ accomplished is not canceled. But if he stubbornly harbors hatred and refuses to forgive, God is not pleased with that attitude, and He does not leave that person's wrong covered up but rebukes and disciplines him. His fellowship with God is blocked, he cannot fully carry out prayer and the work of the gospel, and hindrances can also arise in enjoying the help and blessings God gives on this earth.

Therefore the way to receive the remission of sin before God is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and forgiving others is the fruit of faith that the person who has received that remission of sin must show. If it is hard to forgive from the heart, we should not force an outward show by our own strength but pray that God will make us realize again the remission of sin we have received. As God pitied us and remitted all our sins, so we too must forgive one another's trespasses and live in harmony.

[Question] 24. In Matthew 6:16–18, how are hypocritical fasting and fasting before God distinguished?

Hypocritical fasting is meant to show people, not God, the fact that one is fasting. The hypocrites deliberately put on sad countenances and disfigured their faces to show that they had been fasting long and suffering. Through this they tried to receive recognition and praise from people as godly persons of deep faith.

Jesus said of such people, *"they have their reward."* What they wanted was the recognition of men, and since they had already received it, no reward remained for them to receive from God. However hard the fasting may look outwardly, if its purpose is to display one's own righteousness and gain glory from men, God does not receive it as true fasting.

On the other hand, fasting before God is done in secret, not conscious of people's eyes, only to seek God's help. When Jesus said, *"anoint your head and wash your face,"* He meant to keep the same neat appearance as in ordinary times when not fasting. We must not deliberately display the pain of fasting or expect others to recognize it.

True fasting is not a boast of one's own godliness or a merit for obtaining the remission of sin. It is humbling the heart before God while restraining even food, and praying still more earnestly for weighty problems and the work of the gospel, seeking His help. There is no power in fasting itself; the heart that believes and depends on God and the purpose of the prayer must be set right.

These words are not limited to fasting but apply to the whole life of faith. We must not lead our life of faith to look loyal and godly to people, but must set our hearts before God

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and live for His will. If the outward appearance looks godly but the heart seeks its own glory and the praise of men, it is hypocrisy; and if, though no one recognizes it, one does in faith what pleases God, that is true faith before God.

Therefore hypocritical fasting and fasting before God are distinguished not by how long one has outwardly gone hungry, but by whom one wants to be seen by and what one aims at. God, who sees in secret, examines not the outward appearance but the heart and the motive, and He fittingly repays the person who fasts and prays in true faith.

[Question] 25. In Matthew 6:19–21, where did Jesus tell the saints to lay up their riches?

Jesus told the saints not to lay up treasures on earth but to lay them up in heaven. Treasures laid up on earth can be ruined by moth and rust and taken away by thieves, and no one can take them along when he dies. However much worldly riches, honor, and power one gathers, they are temporary and vanish in the end.

To lay up treasures in heaven does not mean literally moving material things up to heaven. It means using the riches, time, talents, and strength God has given for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel. Serving so that the gospel of the water and the Spirit may be preached, looking after God’s church and the workers of the gospel, and laboring so that souls receive the remission of sins is the life of laying up treasures in heaven. Helping brothers, sisters, and neighbors in hardship in faith is also included here.

The Scriptures do not say that riches themselves are evil or that we must own nothing. The saints need material things for

living, must care for their families, and must faithfully carry out the work given to them. But if a person stores up riches only for his own comfort and glory and depends on them more than on God, riches become his master. The saint must not serve riches, but must use them as a tool entrusted to him by God.

To the born-again, the true treasures are God and Jesus Christ, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God's church, and the souls that must be saved. The person who counts these treasures precious willingly uses his life and possessions for the good of the gospel. God remembers that faith and labor and repays them with the imperishable reward of heaven.

The words *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* mean that a person's heart stays where what he counts most precious is. The heart of the person who piles up riches only in the world is bound to the world, but the heart of the person who uses them for the kingdom of God and the gospel turns toward God and the kingdom of heaven. Therefore the saints must not make earthly riches the purpose of life, but must lay up treasures in heaven by using them for the eternal kingdom of God and the salvation of souls.

[Question] 26. In Matthew 6:22–23, what role did Jesus say the eye plays in our body?

Jesus said, *"The lamp of the body is the eye."* If the eye of the body is bright, one can discern objects and find the right way to go, so the whole body can move safely. But if the eye is bad, one cannot see ahead, so the whole body can go down a wrong path as if in darkness.

These words point not only to the physical eye but are a

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metaphor for the eye of the heart that discerns what one counts right and precious—that is, spiritual insight. If the eyes of the heart are rightly opened toward the word of God and the gospel, one can see clearly the value of God and His will, the gospel, the church, and souls. Then that person's thoughts, words, and actions also move brightly toward the will of God.

On the contrary, if the eyes of the heart look only at the riches and honor of the world, the comfort of the flesh, and one's own profit, spiritual judgment of value grows dark. Such a person takes God's work lightly and makes the things of the earth his treasure, and while thinking the way he goes is right, he actually proceeds in a wrong direction. As the whole body becomes dark when the eye is dark, so when spiritual judgment goes wrong, the purpose and direction of the whole life also go wrong.

For the eye to be 'good' means not trying to hold on to God and the world at the same time, but setting the goal of the heart clearly on the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The person who counts the gospel of the water and the Spirit the most precious truth and looks upon God's church and the salvation of souls as his treasure is a person whose spiritual eye is bright. He does not use even worldly riches only to fill his own desires but uses them for the good of the gospel.

The words *"If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"* mean that the state of following wrong values while thinking oneself spiritually bright and right is very dangerous. If one believes his own thoughts apart from the word to be light, he cannot realize his own darkness.

Therefore the words that the eye is the lamp of the body mean that spiritual insight leads a person's whole life. The saint must not look at the world with his own thoughts and desires, but must discern by the word of God what is truly

precious, and must set the goal of his life clearly toward the kingdom of God and the gospel.

[Question] 27. How does Matthew 6:24 explain the reason one person cannot serve two masters?

Verse 24 says, *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other."* When the wills and demands of two masters differ, a servant cannot fully obey both. In the end he chooses one side to love and value, and hates or takes lightly the other.

The two masters Jesus spoke of are God and riches. God tells the saints to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and to live for the gospel and souls. But when riches become the master, a person pursues first his own safety and comfort, honor and fleshly desires. The purpose of serving God and the purpose of serving riches are opposed to each other, so the two cannot be served at the same time as the most important masters of life.

To serve riches does not simply mean owning money or working hard. It means depending on riches more than on God, making the gaining and keeping of money the most important purpose of life, and pushing back the word of God and the work of the gospel because of riches. If a person says with his mouth that he believes in God but in his actual choices always puts his own profit and riches first, his true master is not God but riches.

To the saint, riches must be not a master but a tool entrusted by God. Riches should be used to prepare what is needed for living, to care for one's family, to help others, and to serve the

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preaching of the gospel. To govern and use riches according to God's will is right, but to be ruled by riches and abandon God's will is the wrong life of trying to serve two masters.

The saint who has received the remission of sins is a servant who belongs to God, who saved him. Since a servant must do what his master desires and commands, he must set the center of his heart on God and His word and value the gospel, the church, and souls. If he makes himself, the world, and riches another master, his heart is divided, and in the end he serves neither God nor riches fully and falls into distress.

Therefore verse 24 teaches that we cannot love God and riches equally and chase the benefit of both. The saint must choose God alone as his true Master, and use riches for His will and for the preaching of the gospel.

[Question] 28. In Matthew 6:25, what is the meaning of the words not to worry about what to eat and drink and what to put on?

When Jesus told us not to worry about what to eat and drink and what to put on, He did not mean to ignore food, clothing, and shelter or to make no preparation at all. The saint must do his work faithfully, prepare what is needed for living, and care responsibly for his family. It is a word telling us not to let our hearts be taken captive by anxiety over food and clothing, making them the master and the purpose of life.

Jesus said, *"Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"* It means: will not God, who gave life and formed the body, give the food to sustain that life and the clothing the body needs? God, who has given what is greater and more precious, also knows the smaller needs of life and

can supply them.

Worry is the attitude of continually fretting in one's heart over what has not yet happened, failing to trust God's protection and provision. People, fearing that food and clothing may run short in the future, easily pile up riches and spend all their hearts on the safety and comfort of their own flesh. Then they come to depend on riches rather than God, and the life for the gospel and the kingdom of God gets pushed aside.

These words are not a teaching to do nothing and only wait for God to feed us. The saint should ask God for daily bread while giving thanks for the health, ability, and workplace He has given, and should carry out his work responsibly. But after doing his best he must entrust the results to God, and he must not think that his survival depends only on his own ability and riches.

The most important purpose in the life of the saint who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not to make his flesh comfortable but to live for the kingdom of God and the salvation of souls. When the saint lives seeking first the gospel and God's will, God also cares for and fills what he needs on this earth. Therefore the saint must not give up God's work or step back from faith because of the problems of food, clothing, and shelter.

In the end, these words are not a command to give no thought at all to the needs of living, but a word telling us not to be gripped by worry and to trust God the Father. The saint should faithfully do the work given today, pray to God for what he needs, and count God and His kingdom more precious than the problems of eating, drinking, and clothing.

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[Question] 29. In Matthew 6:26–32, what does the fact that the heavenly Father, who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field, cares still more for the saints teach us?

The words about feeding the birds of the air and beautifully clothing the lilies of the field teach that God is the One who cares in detail for every creature He has made. The birds neither sow seed nor store grain in barns, yet they find food to live because the heavenly Father raises them through nature.

The lilies of the field also neither labor nor spin, yet God clothes them beautifully. Their beauty is not gained by human effort, and even the garments Solomon wore in all his glory did not reach the beauty of one flower God made. If God so clothes even the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the oven tomorrow, it is only natural that He cares still more for His children.

In particular, Jesus said that the saints are far more precious beings than the birds of the air and the grass of the field. God has become the Father of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and has made them His children and His people. Therefore He is not One who does not know or care about the food, clothing, and shelter the saints need. God already knows what the saints must have.

These words also teach that worry cannot solve man's problems. However much a person worries, he cannot add one cubit to his stature by that worry. Worry produces nothing that is needed; rather, it takes away the faith and peace of the heart and consumes the thought and strength that should be used for the kingdom of God. Jesus called the worrying saints *"O you of little faith"* because they do not sufficiently trust God's care.

The Gentiles do not know God as their Father, so they seek what to eat, drink, and wear as the most important matters of life. But the saint knows God the Father who cares for him, so he must not make food, clothing, and shelter the final purpose of life. He should pray to God for what he needs and do his work faithfully, but entrust excessive worry about the results to God.

This does not mean, however, that like the birds we should do nothing and stay still. As the birds also move about to find the food God has prepared, so the saint must work, prepare, and carry out his responsibilities. Only, he must not depend on his own effort alone, but believe that the One who grants the ability, the opportunity, and the results of work is God.

Therefore this parable is a teaching that God knows and cares for the needs of His children in both body and soul, so we must not be gripped by worry. The saint must not chase only food, clothing, and shelter like the people of the world, but must trust God, who counts him precious, and live by the faith that seeks first His kingdom and His righteousness.

[Question] 30. What does Matthew 6:33 tell the saints to seek first?

Verse 33 says, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."* This means that the saint must not make what to eat, drink, and wear the most important question of life, but must think of and seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness God has accomplished.

To seek *"the kingdom of God"* is to ask that the kingdom God rules be established and expanded on this earth. It means praying and serving so that the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit is preached to the whole world, sinners receive the remission of sins and become God's people, God's churches are established in every nation and region, and workers of the gospel arise. The saint must not live only for his own success and comfort, but must make the salvation of souls and the expansion of the kingdom of God the purpose of his life.

To seek *"His righteousness"* is to believe and preach the righteousness of the complete salvation God accomplished through Jesus Christ. Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist; bearing those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood; and by rising from the dead He fulfilled all the righteousness of God. A sinner must believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins, and the saved saint must deliver this righteousness to those who do not yet know it.

The word *"first"* here points to the priority of life. It does not mean that the saint must not have an occupation, care for his family, or prepare what is needed for living. He must carry out such responsibilities faithfully, but the purpose and priority of everything must be set on the kingdom of God and the good of the gospel. He must not give up God's work because of the needs of the flesh, but must use his time, talents, and material things worthily for the preaching of the gospel.

The words *"and all these things shall be added to you"* are the promise that when the saint seeks first the kingdom and the righteousness of God, God knows and fills the food, clothing, shelter, and conditions of life he needs. This does not mean that He satisfies worldly greed or unconditionally makes one a great rich man; it means that He supplies what is needed to live serving the kingdom of God, according to His own wisdom and timing.

Therefore the saint must not worry first about what to eat, drink, and wear, but must first seek that the gospel of the water and the Spirit be preached, souls be saved, and God's church be firmly established. God cares for His people who live by this faith and adds to them everything they need.

[Question] 31. According to Matthew 6:34, with what faith must we face worry about tomorrow?

Jesus said, *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."* This means not to drag the things of tomorrow, which have not even happened yet, into today's anxiety, but to entrust tomorrow to God the Father, who governs it.

Man does not know what will happen tomorrow and cannot control the future by his own strength. Yet if he keeps worrying about his future living, health, riches, children, and ministry, he ends up shouldering in advance today even burdens that have not yet arrived. Worrying does not change the future; rather, it makes him lose the strength and faith to carry out faithfully the work God has entrusted for today.

This does not mean, however, that we should make no plans or preparations for the future. Asking God for wisdom, preparing what is needed, and faithfully carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to us is different from being gripped by fear through unbelief. We must prepare in faith but entrust the results to God, and must not worry depending only on our own calculations.

The saint must not make securing his own future the first purpose of life, but must seek first the kingdom of God and His

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righteousness. He must preach the gospel that should be preached today, serve the souls that should be served, and faithfully carry out the responsibilities of family, work, and church that God has entrusted. He must believe that the wisdom, strength, and material things needed tomorrow God will grant on that day.

The words *"Sufficient for the day is its own trouble"* mean that the labor and hardship to be borne today are enough in themselves. There may be hardship tomorrow as well, but God also gives on that day the grace to bear it. Therefore the saint, instead of fearing tomorrow, must pray to God, be faithful in the work given today, and live by the faith that entrusts all future results to God. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The righteous who have received the remission of sins pray to the Father in faith

< Matthew 6:5-8 >

"'And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 'Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."

First, stand before God

Jesus did not tell us not to pray. He told us not to pray to be seen by men. The hypocrites loved to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets. Their lips called on God, but their hearts waited for the eyes of the people passing by. They seemed to be asking God for help, but in reality they were asking people to recognize their godliness. Therefore the

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praise of men they received was the whole of their reward.

Prayer is not a time for displaying godly words. Nor is it the work of composing sentences that other people will admire when they hear them. Prayer is a lacking person asking the living God for actual help. If wisdom is needed, we ask for wisdom; if a door for preaching the gospel is needed, we ask Him to open that door; and if our faith is weak, we ask Him to hold us up. Words spoken not to God but for people's ears, however beautiful, are not prayer.

The words *"But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place" (Matthew 6:6)* make clear the One to whom we pray. The heart of the inner room lies not in the structure of the room but in facing God one to one. Whether we pray alone or pray together with the saints, our hearts must look only to God. We must not pray while conscious of how the person next to us will hear our prayer, or with a heart that wants to prove we are people of faith.

When you pray, speak before God. Raising the voice does not bring us nearer to God, nor does lowering the voice make us more godly. The volume and length of our words do not decide the truth of prayer. What matters is whether we believe that God actually hears and offer Him our hearts. We can pray briefly and still believe with the heart and ask plainly. We can also hold one topic long in the heart and pray over it repeatedly. Only, we must not repeat words without meaning and try to move God by the quantity of words.

The words *"For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8)* do not mean that since God knows, we need not pray. They mean that the One who already knows our circumstances is our Father, so we should believe and pray. Prayer is not giving God new information but

believing the Father and asking for help. Not praying, with the Father's knowledge as an excuse, is unbelief; and piling up words as though the Father did not know is also unbelief.

First, receive the remission of sins

When we come to God to pray, the first obstacle we meet is the problem of sin. The person who believes there is sin in his heart cannot stand boldly before the holy God. Though he calls God Father with his lips, in his heart he fears like a slave. On days when he has lived well, it seems God will hear him; on days when he has done wrong, he thinks his qualification to pray has vanished. This is because he sets the ground of prayer not on God's salvation but on his own deeds.

Even the person who has received the remission of sins has faults. He has the weakness of the flesh, and there are times when he wounds others or goes against God's will. We must not cover a wrong by calling it not wrong. We must acknowledge it before God, and if we have wronged a person, apologize and set it right. But we must not believe that because of that fault the sins Jesus Christ removed have come into being again in our hearts. The problem of sin is not erased little by little by correcting our own conduct; it must be solved by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Savior accomplished.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes plain where sin was actually transferred and how it was judged. Jesus said to John the Baptist, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, all the sins of the world were passed on to His body. The sinless Savior thus received and bore all the sins of sinners. So the next day John

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the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Jesus went to the Cross carrying the sins of the world passed on to Him. He received in our place the judgment of sin we should have received, shed His blood, and actually died. The Scriptures testify, *"Christ died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3),* and go on to testify that *"He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4).* The Lord rose from death and defeated sin and death. Through the baptism Jesus received from John, the sins of the world were passed on to His body; carrying those sins, the Lord was crucified, judged in our place, shed His blood and actually died, and rose from death in three days. Thus He fulfilled all the righteousness of God and completed our salvation.

The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart is washed of all sins at once. He becomes a righteous person with no sin in his heart, receives the Holy Spirit, is born again, and becomes a child of God. While acknowledging his faults, he can believe the fact that even those faults were passed on to Jesus Christ and the judgment is finished. This faith opens the way to God. It lets us stand boldly before the Father, not putting forward our own merit but leaning on the righteousness the Savior completed.

As the words say, *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15),* the ground on which we can call God Father is the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit. Before you pray, do not count your good deeds and manufacture a qualification. Confirm whether the sins of your heart have been removed by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Believe with your heart, here and now, the word that the Lord has settled all sins, and come to the Father.

First, ask for the preaching of the gospel

After the problem of sin, what blocks prayer is selfish desire. If we come to God asking only for the comfort and success of our own flesh, prayer is shut up inside our own desires. We give no thought to what God's will is, what the gospel and the church need, or what our suffering brothers and sisters and the lost souls need. We ask only that our own circumstances improve. Such prayer does not widen the heart; it makes it darker and smaller.

This does not mean we must not pray for our own needs. God knows His children's health, workplace, family, and living. He tells us to ask for what we actually need. But praying only about ourselves from the beginning of prayer to the end does not fit the heart of God. We must first think of what pleases God. When we lay down our selfish desires and seek the good of the kingdom of God, prayer at last embraces other people and widens toward God's will.

We must set the order of prayer right in our hearts. First ask that the gospel be preached with power. Ask that the workers who deliver the word receive wisdom, health, and boldness. Ask that your family, your neighbors, and the souls of the world who have not yet heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit may hear the truth and receive the remission of sins. Ask Him to give the doors, the material things, and the workers the church needs to carry out its work. Ask Him to hold up the brothers and sisters in trials and discouragement, to give health to the sick, and to raise up those whose faith is weak.

In this way prayer goes around the world, reaches our brothers and sisters and family, and at last comes back to ourselves. We ask for faith to serve the Lord, for wisdom to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for help to keep faith in an evil generation, and for the health and daily needs we require.

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Our own needs do not disappear; they find their right place within God's will. The petition that was only for ourselves widens into a righteous petition that embraces the kingdom of God and souls.

Prayer is not a technique for bending God's will to our desires. It is examining our desires before God and fitting our hearts to His will. When we search out what pleases God and ask for that, boldness arises in the heart. Since we are asking for the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls, we have no hidden selfishness, so we can speak plainly. Within such prayer we can entrust even our own problems to God's will.

The righteous can ask help of the God of power

We must not turn the word about vain repetitions into a word that forbids prayer. To say that since God knows our needs there is nothing to ask is to read the passage backwards. The Lord forbade hypocrisy and empty repetition; He did not forbid petitions offered in faith. God knows what His children need, and yet He wants His children to believe the Father and ask.

Before you pray, hold in your heart what you will ask. Look into what the church and the work of the gospel need, think of the circumstances of your brothers, sisters, and family, and discern before the word what you truly need. Do not hastily manufacture words only at the hour of prayer, but keep those topics in your heart at ordinary times as well. Pray first with the heart, and then open your lips in the faith that God hears, and tell Him plainly.

If we only repeat words without the faith that the Father answers, prayer becomes like the incantation of the heathen. On the other hand, if we believe that God, who saved us from sin

and destruction, is our Father, we can ask. God, who solved the greatest problem—sin—and made us His children, is not One who cannot give His children the help they need. We entrust the time and manner of the answer to God, but we must not doubt the fact that God hears us for good.

The words *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16)* make clear the fact that the righteous can pray. The righteous person is not someone whose flesh is perfect but someone who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. As a royal priest he can come to God and intercede for the gospel, for souls, and for his brothers and sisters. Instead of despairing because he has no ability of his own, he can ask help of the God of power.

Prayer is a weapon given to the righteous. The word of God is a weapon that fights falsehood, and prayer is a weapon that entrusts to God the hardships we cannot solve by our own strength. The person who knows how to pray does not utterly collapse when hardship comes. He tells God, receives help, and rises again. He does not try to carry the work of the gospel by his own strength but goes forward asking God for power and wisdom.

Yet we must not make prayer a means of avoiding what must be done in reality. If you prayed for souls to be sent who will hear the gospel, you must go to people and urge them to hear the word. If you asked Him to fill what the church needs, you must look at the work given to you and labor at it. If you asked for your family's salvation, you must speak the truth plainly when the door to preach the gospel opens. The prayer of faith does not throw away responsibility; it makes us do what must be done, believing that God will answer.

Nor should we shut the answer to prayer inside our own timetable. If we conclude that God has not heard because our

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circumstances do not change at once, we have not asked in faith. God knows the most fitting time and way. We must tell Him plainly what we need and entrust the sovereignty of the answer to the Father. Even if visible change is slow, do not throw away the good prayer topics held in your heart, but keep asking in faith.

There are times when we do not know exactly what to pray for. Then the Holy Spirit helps our weakness and leads us to intercede according to the will of God. But we must not move only our lips without thought on the ground that the Holy Spirit helps. We must examine before the word what God's will is, and think of what the gospel, souls, the church, and our brothers and sisters need. We must become people who seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit while holding in our hearts the topics we will pray for.

The prayer of the righteous is not shut up in the circumstances of one person. As a royal priest he embraces before God those who have not yet heard the gospel, intercedes in place of brothers and sisters who are weary and tested, and asks for the wisdom, health, and boldness the workers preaching the gospel need. He can tell God even of matters beyond the reach of his own hands. So prayer widens the sight of the righteous and carries one person's heart out to the kingdom of God and the souls of the world.

When you meet hardship, do not merely repeat discouragement. Tell the Father, who is greater than the problem. If your wisdom is lacking, ask for wisdom; if your faith is weak, ask Him to hold you; if the way is blocked, ask Him to open the door of the gospel. The person who knows how to tell God does not give up everything because of his own inability. The righteous who have received the remission of sins are not people abandoned alone but children of God who can ask help of the Father.

The righteous who have received the remission of sins pray to the Father in faith

The prayer of petition for the kingdom of God

True prayer is not a performance to draw people's eyes. It is actual petition exchanged with God one to one. Therefore, when you enter the inner room, first examine the two obstacles. Solve the problem of the sins of the heart by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ completed. Lay down the heart that clutches only its own desires, and look to the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls, which please God.

Then ask for the good of the kingdom of God. Pray for the workers who preach the gospel and for the church, for the souls not yet saved, and for the weak brothers and sisters. And then ask for the faith, wisdom, health, and living you yourself need. This order is not an order that ignores personal needs; it is the order that places personal needs within the good will of God.

Prayer offered like this begins in one person's inner room but becomes petition that helps the whole world. It embraces the places where the gospel has not yet been delivered, asks for the safety and power of the workers going there, and asks Him to send souls who will hear the word. It looks again at the church, the brothers and sisters, and the family, and finally asks for faith to follow the Lord and the strength one needs. The prayer circles the world and comes back to oneself. One's own needs are not left out; they receive their right place within the kingdom of God.

Prayer worthy of the name does not become familiar by itself. We must learn the direction of prayer from the word and actually tell God. We must turn the things we only worried about vaguely into prayer topics, entrust to the Father what we tried to solve alone, and embrace other people's hardships as our own. As the righteous pray again and again like this, they learn to seek God's will before their own thoughts and learn the faith that waits for

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the answer. Prayer is not a doctrine known only as knowledge but faith actually used, depending on God.

If you have a problem unsolved today, do not keep repeating the same thoughts in worry. Decide clearly before the word what you must ask, and tell it to God. After praying in the faith that the Father hears, do not seize that problem again with your own strength alone, but entrust it to God.

Do not show your prayer to men. But do not stop praying because no one sees it either. Do not keep silent because the Father already knows; rather, because the Father knows, believe all the more and ask. Do not try to persuade with many words, but state plainly the topics held in your heart. Do not be discouraged when there is no answer visible at once, but entrust it to God.

You are people who can pray. You have been washed of all sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have received the Holy Spirit, and have become children of God. God is not a strange deity far away; He is your Father. Do not hesitate, blocked by the condemnation of sin and by selfish desire. Come before the Father, who sees in secret, and tell Him in faith the needs of the gospel, of souls, of the church, of your brothers and sisters, and of yourself. God hears the prayer of the righteous who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Ruminating on the gospel and preaching it is our daily bread

< Matthew 6:9-13 >

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

The prayer that tells us to ask for daily bread

How are you, everyone? I truly thank God for giving us psalms and hymns and spiritual songs and letting us praise Him. I also give thanks that He has made us soldiers of Christ. Our hymns have now come out to more than three hundred. Though the words are the same, the melodies keep getting better as we go. I truly thank God for giving praise to us the righteous, making us write it and sing it and praise before God.

If this gospel had entered our country from the very beginning of its Christian history, by now the whole world might have been evangelized and this land might have become a paradise on earth. Such a wistful feeling is in my heart. But I

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thank God that even now He has given us this gospel and this grace. The church of God is truly beautiful and precious.

Nearly three hundred saints have gathered at this retreat today. Since God is pleased that the gospel is preached, I believe He has called together this many souls, and I give thanks.

God gives the church the word, wisdom, faith, and power, and He carries out His work. Now we are three hundred, but in a while we will be a thousand, and later two thousand. Furthermore, the day will come when ten thousand come in a single day. In days to come, co-workers who have received the remission of sins and are ministering will visit the churches in Korea and hold retreats together with us. I believe the day is not far off when they will hear the word through interpretation and offer praise with us with one heart.

The day will come when people of every nation and every race fill this place and worship together. If God allows it, still more souls will come in and worship. If the number grows too large to manage, I believe God will give a larger site and a larger house, more material things, faith, and blessings. Before our Lord comes, these things will surely happen, God will receive the glory, and the kingdom of God will be established in all the world—this I believe.

Today also, from the prayer the Lord taught, we want to share grace centering on Matthew 6:11, *"Give us this day our daily bread."* God told us to pray for our daily bread today. It is the prayer that asks for this bread.

Our true bread is the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In fact, what we need every day, the true bread of our life, is

the remission of sin the Lord accomplished by the baptism He received for us and the blood of the Cross. It is this gospel that remitted our sins, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By believing this gospel it becomes the bread of our hearts and the bread of life.

Living on this earth, we need daily bread every day. As long as we have a body, until we put on the spiritual body, we must eat new food every day to live. It is not that having eaten yesterday we need not eat today. Even if we ate today, after we sleep we must eat again from tomorrow morning. Thus we must eat afresh every day the food we need.

Then why must we eat like that? Because not only our bodies must eat, but our souls must eat as well. The food of the soul is the gospel. We eat the bread of life, the gospel, the truth, by believing. Living on this earth, we are wrapped in weakness every day and sin every day. That is why the Lord told us to pray, *"Give us this day our daily bread."* He told us to eat this bread of life and live by believing the word of God, by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore we must ruminate often on this gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given us. We must ruminate on it daily.

If we grow lazy in doing this daily, fold it away saying it is already all done, and try to find something else new, we fall into great temptation and come to destruction. God has given us this gospel of salvation so that we can eat our daily bread every day. Therefore we must always meditate on the baptism the Lord received for us when He came to this earth and on the blood of the Cross. By ruminating on this word we escape from the sins we commit daily, and we eat by faith the new strength and the food of the heart.

Today we want to eat this food thinking together on the words of Matthew 3:13 through 17. We will also share the part

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that a soldier of the Lord doing God's work is precisely eating his daily bread, and why doing God's work becomes the bread of life. Let us look together from Matthew 3:13.

The reason the Lord received baptism from John

It is Matthew 3:13. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him."* This is the word that the Lord sought to be baptized by John in order to bear our sins. We fall into weakness and commit sins every day. But we must never forget this baptism the Lord received from John when He came to this earth. If we lose this, it is destruction; the work of life does not arise and we die. We fail to gain new strength.

Why did the Lord come to this earth and seek to be baptized by John? It was to bear our sins. As the Son of God the Father, the Lord could have enjoyed glory on the throne of heaven. But He cast off all that heavenly glory and, upholding the Father's will, came to this earth. He put on flesh and came to be baptized by John the Baptist in order to bear our sins. You and I are lacking and weak every day.

The Lord told us to pray, *"Give us this day our daily bread."* These words can be explained in several ways. For example, we can gain the bread of life by rising in the morning, praying in meditation, reading the Scriptures, and praying—by reading and eating the word of God. But that alone is not enough. We are those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we are such people, we must never forget the Lord coming to the Jordan and receiving baptism from John, and the whole course of His death on the Cross, His resurrection, and His ascension—this gospel. For this gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes our daily bread.

Every day we sin. Because we have the flesh every day, our thoughts and hearts are bound to the flesh, and there are times when we sink into it and times when we despair. That is why what we need at all times is the gospel—the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By ruminating on this gospel we gain the food of the heart, and we gain the strength and power of the heart. We gain the strength to live each day in this world.

Some take it lightly, saying that if they believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit once, that is enough. And some crowd says that since they received the remission of sins once, they now have no sin and do not sin. They say ignorant things—that since there is no law there is no sin, and that even if they sin it does not become sin. But as long as God lives, God's Law still stands over us, God's statutes still stand, and this salvation by which God saved us still stands. Therefore, by ruminating on this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we realize afresh that the Lord received baptism from John, coming to the Jordan River to bear our sins.

John the Baptist was the last High Priest

This John the Baptist, as we know well, is a descendant of Aaron's high priesthood in the Old Testament. And he is a man the Lord acknowledged. The Lord said that from the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of heaven suffers violence. Also, in the Old Testament He said He would send a servant in the last days, namely Elijah, and in Matthew chapter 11 He testified that that Elijah is precisely John the Baptist. John the Baptist had to pass our sins over to Jesus Christ, so he came to this earth six months ahead of Jesus.

He came and baptized people, crying out, "Repent, you

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brood of vipers! If you do not repent, the ax is already laid to the root of the trees**"** Rebuking them like this, he turned people around. He rebuked them, saying that the LORD alone is the true God and the other gods are no gods, and led people before God. When people heard John the Baptist and returned before God, Jesus Christ went to John the Baptist and told him to baptize Him.

To remove the sins of all who return to God, the Lord went to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. When we think of this, we are truly thankful. This becomes our daily bread. We can shake off the dust that settles daily on our hearts, the desires of the flesh and all the sins of the body, and run toward the Lord with a clean heart. We gain new strength and, as soldiers of Christ, can shine the light of the gospel toward dying souls. Therefore we must ruminate on this gospel daily.

Daily we must ruminate on that work by which John the Baptist baptized Jesus and made Him bear our sins. Let us look at verse 14 together.

"And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?'" In fact, John was the earthly high priest, the last high priest. The Old Testament ends with the role of John the Baptist, and now the promised Savior, the Messiah, namely Jesus Christ, had already come to this earth. Therefore John the Baptist had to baptize Jesus Christ, pass over the sin of the world, and finish his own duty. For from now on it is the age of Jesus Christ. All the promises ended and the Substance came. Since the Substance came and fulfilled all the promises, it became the age in which He gives salvation to those who believe in the Substance. From the time Jesus Christ came to this earth, the age of the Old Testament ended and the kingdom of Christ began.

John the Baptist is not greater than Jesus Christ. Why? Because he is a human being, a creature. But Jesus Christ is not

a human being and not a creature.

Jesus Christ was begotten of God the Father, yet He is fundamentally different from us. If we read Hebrews, we can see why this epistle was written. Hebrews deals with angels from chapter 1. It compares angels and Jesus Christ and explains who is superior. Why was this epistle so important to the Hebrews of that time? Because even among those who had heard and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit—those who had actually seen Jesus Christ and knew and believed why He was baptized and why He died on the Cross—the angel-worship handed down from of old was very deep-rooted. So there were many who regarded Jesus as one of the angels.

There were also many who regarded Jesus as lower than the angels. Because there were so many who worshiped angels, a servant of God sought to set it right. Who wrote Hebrews has not been revealed. Some say the Apostle Paul and some say Barnabas, but what is certain is that he was a servant of God versed in the Old Testament and one who knew and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He makes plain that Jesus Christ is the Creator, far superior to the angels. Angels are creatures, but Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father and the Creator who made the universe and all things. So it speaks in chapter 1, and passing to chapter 2 it speaks of how superior Jesus Christ is, though He came clothed in human flesh.

What does it say from chapter 3? People who take lightly what they heard of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—such people drift away and in the end fall into angel worship and meet destruction. It speaks of such things in chapter 3 and speaks of them in chapter 4 as well. The whole of Hebrews is such a word. Yet some people take this Hebrews and say this and that about the blood of Christ, prattling as they please before the spiritually blind while knowing nothing themselves. Before the spiritually

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blind, whatever one says passes as it is. But if we look closely into the text, we can see it is not so. The Lord's Prayer is so, and all the Scriptures are qualitatively different and fundamentally different from what they say.

John the Baptist did not fail

People greatly despise John the Baptist. Even among evangelicals, some say John the Baptist failed. Why do they say so? Because of what happened when John the Baptist was shut in prison. When King Herod took an unlawful woman and committed a wicked sin, John the Baptist rebuked it as an evil deed and was seized and imprisoned. While he was in prison, his disciples came to visit him. John the Baptist asked his disciples: is the news that reaches my ears true? They say Jesus opens people's eyes and heals the sick; go and ask Him directly whether He is the Messiah who was promised to come.

John the Baptist sent his own disciples to go to Jesus and ask: are You the Messiah promised to come? Are You the Savior? Are You the Deliverer promised in the Old Testament? At this, people say: look, John the Baptist did not recognize Jesus, so John the Baptist failed, and standing against King Herod he was beheaded and died. But the Scriptures do not say so. *"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30)*. John the Baptist said that when Jesus Christ came and bore all the sin of the world, and people believed and followed Him and received the remission of sins, he himself had to disappear from this earth.

John the Baptist did not do this because he did not know Jesus. Rather, because the disciples of John the Baptist exalted John the Baptist above Jesus, John sent his disciples to Jesus so that they might confirm for themselves that He is the Messiah.

John the Baptist already knew when he baptized Him.

In John chapter 1 it is recorded that he knew that the One on whom the Spirit descended and remained while he was baptizing was the Messiah. John the Baptist knew fully who Jesus was. That is why in today's passage as well he said, *"I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" (Matthew 3:14)* People have no Holy Spirit and no spirit, so they just piece things together as suits them. But we can understand this word, believe it, and know it.

Why did John the Baptist have to speak like this? John the Baptist was a servant of God born as a descendant of the high-priestly family, who had to carry out the duty of the last high priest. But the Messiah who was promised came to this earth in human flesh, appeared before him, bowed His head before him, told him to baptize Him—pass the sin of the world over to Me, complete your duty. So he spoke like that because he knew how exalted Jesus Christ is. It was not merely out of humility. People say John the Baptist was polite and spoke humbly, but it is not so. He recognized the One who ought to be recognized and exalted the One who ought to be exalted. When the Lord came, he recognized Him rightly and spoke this way. Therefore we greatly respect this John the Baptist as a servant of God.

The Lord said of John the Baptist that among those born of women there is none greater. John the Baptist is greater than Moses and greater than the prophet Isaiah. People regard Moses as great and regard John the Baptist as nothing, but it is not so. Jesus Himself said: among those born of women there is none greater than John the Baptist; the Elijah who was to come is this man, John the Baptist; he will come and turn many, the lost souls, back to Christ; and whoever does not believe what he testifies will suffer the judgment of fire on the last day. So He said.

God promised mankind, you and me, by His word. He said,

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I will send John the Baptist; I will come as the Savior. And He is our true Savior who fulfills exactly as He promised. Our Lord is not rude, not a tyrant, and not a moral teacher who cares only for etiquette. He is God, perfect in every way, holy, omniscient and omnipotent. Let us look at verse 15 together.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness

"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15) By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bears the sins of all people. That is why Jesus commanded: Permit it to be so now, for it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way. This is because Jesus Christ came to this earth as the atoning sacrifice that removes the sin of this world, as the sacrificial Lamb. For Jesus Christ to remove our sins He had to bear the sins without fail, so He commanded like this. Our Lord came to this earth and received baptism from John the Baptist; John permitted it and baptized Him, and Jesus received the baptism. While we ceaselessly commit sins in this world every day, the Lord came to this earth and received baptism from John, and so bore our sins for us.

That is why we gain new life and new strength by meditating on this and ruminating on it. As the stomach is filled when we eat rice, so when we acknowledge our lack before God and acknowledge our sins, yet ruminate in faith on the Lord receiving baptism through John the Baptist and having our sins passed on to Him, our sins are transferred by faith and our hearts are washed clean. Thus we live as a holy people lacking nothing at all in living before God. God has become the bread of life for us, our daily bread day by day. Jesus is the bread of life and the

food of life. What Jesus Christ did through His thirty-three years of life on this earth became the bread of life and the daily bread for all mankind.

Whoever meditates in his heart on what Jesus Christ did, confirms it once more, and ruminates on it in faith gains new strength at any time and eats new food, so that daily the belly of his soul is filled and the belly of his body is filled, and he lives well. Because Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of this earth, He bore at once your sins and mine—the sins we commit daily and will commit until we die. Therefore our sins are gone and our sins have been washed. It is a truly clear truth, a truth we cannot do without. Yet people often pass over this and treat it as nothing. Such people remember everything else—why do they not remember only this, and strain to find something else within the Scriptures? Apply the measure of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and everything fits exactly.

In the baptism the Lord received from John there are also His death and resurrection

Let us look together at Matthew 3:16. *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him."* When the Lord received baptism and came up from the water, heaven was opened and the Spirit descended like a dove upon Him. Some people say strange things—that since we preach the baptism, are we not a baptism sect? But in this word—that only when Jesus received baptism and came up from the water was heaven opened and the Spirit of God descended like a dove—all the

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truth is contained. Even without passing on to John chapter 1 or Romans or the Scriptures that come later, for receiving the remission of sins, if we grasp this one verse rightly, everything is complete.

That the Lord came to this earth and received baptism means that He took on our sins, the sin of mankind, once and for all. Because He took on the sin, He bore the sin of the world and died on the Cross. That He came up from the water means that Jesus Christ bore the sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again. It speaks of all three of these things. And it tells us that the One who did this work—Jesus Christ coming to this earth, receiving baptism from John, dying on the Cross, and rising from death to save us from all our sins—is the Triune God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who agreed together and saved us from sin.

There is no case where Jesus died on the Cross without receiving baptism, no case where He only received baptism and did not die on the Cross, and no case where He died on the Cross with the baptism left out. Nor is Jesus a mere man. He is fundamentally God. Therefore, when He received baptism from John, He bore all sins; and because He bore the sins, He died on the Cross. He could shed His blood on the execution frame of the Cross, could say, It is finished, and could rise from death. All this shows us that God the Father, together with the Son and the Holy Spirit, agreed and accomplished it under God's plan to make us God's people and save us from sin.

Living in this world, I see that the saints, the servants of God, I myself, and all people are so very weak. I see that they sin again daily. When we see people who are not even born again singing praise full of assurance, we are rather liable to be deceived. Originally the counterfeit acts more like the real thing. These days even food—does not the fake look more real?

We sin every day—how can we become righteous? The Lord received baptism from John the Baptist and through that baptism bore all our sins. And carrying the sin of the world, He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, paid the price of death—for the wages of sin is death—and rose from death. He gave His own life for our sins and with that life bought us and saved us. So we have received salvation. We did not have to die, did not have to die on the Cross, did not have to pay the price for sin. It is because Jesus Christ came to this earth for us, bore our sins by the baptism He received from John, paid the price of sin on the Cross, and rose again in power to bring us to life. Because He became our perfect Savior, we became those without sin by believing in Him.

In fact, you and I are dust. We are those formed from dust. When we die, we return to a handful of earth. Seventy percent of our body is water; when we fast and pray, since we eat no food, the water leaves the body and the weight drops sharply. But do not push yourselves recklessly without eating—serious harm can come. We are beings formed from dust-like earth, but God breathed the breath of life into it and gave us new life.

These days in Christianity people talk and debate about spirituality. A while ago on a Christian broadcast, a host, doctors of theology, and people involved in publishing came out and debated about spirituality. When asked what spirituality is, they said spirituality is spirituality, and debated for forty-five minutes. Finally the host asked: now, we have talked at length—in conclusion, what can we call spirituality in a word? Then no one could answer. The theologians could not say, and the host could not draw a conclusion. They talked for forty-five minutes and could not reach a conclusion.

One theologian said this: in Genesis, God formed man from dust and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils; if we only

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knew this secret of the breath of life breathed into his nostrils, we could draw a conclusion about spirituality, but since we cannot know this secret, we cannot conclude. They said it themselves after all their own talk. They have no Holy Spirit and no spirit in their hearts, so they could not conclude. In the end they said that spirituality is inheriting the social and theological tradition as it is. They concluded that imitating and cultivating what the forefathers of faith did—rising well for dawn prayers, giving material things well, evangelizing, doing good deeds, trying not to sin—could be called spirituality. I thought, Christianity has gone as far as it can go. I felt, now is truly the time for us to appear.

What is spirituality? What is man? Why must a person receive the Holy Spirit, and why is spirituality needed? We must begin from the root meaning of the word and unfold the gospel. Though we were estranged from God because of sin, the character and spirit of God we bore in our hearts—that state severed from God—we could recover through the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ. Thus we become truly spiritual beings and children of God. Explain it like this and it is done. We are truly weak as we live in this world.

That is why in this baptism the Lord received everything is contained. In it are His taking over of our sins, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection; in it is Jesus Christ being the Son of God, and also His being God to us. It is all in this passage. So we must eat the bread of life, the daily bread, every day by confirming this gospel once more. When something uneasy remains in the heart, we become whole again by confirming this gospel. And when we grow weak again and our thoughts become soiled and our hearts become soiled, we go back to that place and remember the baptism the Lord received from John, what He did and said when He was baptized, His coming up from the

water, and the Spirit's testimony. When we engrave on our hearts—the Lord has made me whole like this—our souls are filled and we gain new strength to live on this earth as soldiers of Christ. We must give thanks for this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and eat this gospel daily and ruminate on it, eating our daily bread.

One more daily bread: the work of God

He said, *"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11)* but the daily bread is not somewhere else. In fact our Lord spoke of the daily bread like this. In John 4:32 He said, *"But He said to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.'"* and in verse 34, *"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work."* The soldiers of the Lord can understand these words of Jesus Christ. The first food needed daily by us the righteous who have received the remission of sins is the gospel. And one more food we need is doing the Lord's work. When Jesus Christ did the work God the Father sent Him to this earth to accomplish, He said that it became food to Him.

You and I eat, confirm, and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit daily, gaining new strength and the daily bread of life. Then, when we do the work of God, we eat the day's food our souls need. If a person who has received the remission of sins does not work, it is like a soldier dying when he neither fights nor trains. He becomes useless. Doing the work of God is itself food. It is actually so. We each do the work given us in our departments. To each of you who have received the remission of sins there is a task entrusted, work you hold in the church. If you cast it aside and do not do it, your body may be comfortable, but

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your heart becomes so empty you cannot live. The heart grows poor. You go hungry and die crushed under that hunger. Even though you have surely received the remission of sins, if you do not do God's work you die. No strength arises. You grow hungry and lose strength. Even if I do not stress this, you already know it from gaining new strength in your church life.

If the righteous do not do God's work, they lose strength

What happens if we do not do God's work? The Holy Spirit is silent. Then our outward man also loses vigor, and without even knowing that he has become a soldier of Christ, he comes to have no power at all. What we the righteous need is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must confirm the gospel of the water and the Spirit daily, acknowledge daily the fleshly sins of the heart, confirm again that the Lord has removed our sins, give thanks, and gain new strength. And we must eat the daily bread and the bread of life and do the work of God, the work of the Lord. When we do the work the Lord has entrusted to us, that work itself becomes strength to us. It becomes daily bread, the food needed for the day. God's work, too, becomes food we need.

If the righteous, the people of heaven, the soldiers of heaven do not do God's work and do only the work of the earth, they starve to death. They lose strength and die. They die because they are not supplied with new strength. Muscles come alive only when we exercise. If we do not exercise, the muscles loosen, and trying to hold up the body with spine and bones alone, we get slipped discs and all kinds of diseases. Only when we strengthen the leg muscles and the spinal muscles and the muscles at the sides by exercise, supporting the spine and

bearing the heavy head and all the weight pressing from above, do we live in health. Likewise, when we do God's work we gain daily bread and new strength. We must know clearly the fact that God's work also becomes strength to us. The Lord said in Matthew 5:6, *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled."* Truly the soldiers of the Lord hunger and thirst for righteousness.

If we do not do God's work even for a day, even for an hour, we only sin and do the works of the flesh, and we grow hungry. To fill that hunger, to accomplish that work so that God's will is done on this earth, we do righteous work. *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33)* The Lord said this in Matthew 6:33. The person who has become a soldier of Christ must ruminate on the gospel daily. And ruminating daily on the gospel, he must bring the lacking parts and sins of his flesh to the Lord. Acknowledging—so I was like this in this part—he must go and confirm again: the Lord bore this sin as well. You may think you know it all, but open the Scriptures again.

The Lord's Prayer, too, is the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Some of you may feel that you hear this at every meeting until your ears are worn. But expound Romans and it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and expound the Lord's Prayer and in the end it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Did you expect something different in this exposition of the Lord's Prayer? I too knew I would come again to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth. Because the Lord came to this earth to complete this

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gospel of the water and the Spirit. I cannot speak as I please either. Nor can you, concerning the Lord's Prayer—since the Lord told us to pray like this, *"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name."*—just pass it over as, let us live holy lives; we are the righteous, so let us live without sinning. Ending with telling one another, you go live well, is a word with no meaning at all. Who would not know that? When the Lord told us in His prayer to pray that the Father's name be hallowed, would that really be all it means?

The Lord surely spoke to us. He gave us the strength to live like this if we believe the word of God, the gospel. We must know the fact that He completed everything and made it so that we can live like this by faith. Yet many people do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and try to understand the Scriptures only by the letter. Told to let His name be hallowed, they think: so I must live kindly, I must not think bad thoughts. So they grab the wrong leg. God made us, and Jesus Christ is our Master, our Creator, and our Savior. Would such a One speak like that not knowing the weak parts of our flesh? He knows it all. It says, *"You have hedged me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me" (Psalms 139:5)* God knows our front and back. He knows all—from before we were born, from when we were in our mother's womb, from when we were in the bodies of our ancestors.

God knows us completely. So the word is: do not bring disgrace on the Father's name, but live well by faith. Become soldiers of Christ by faith. Eat your daily bread by faith. God has given us all our daily bread by faith. We eat and live every day. But some people are lazy and do not eat well. There are people who eat once and then do not eat for a long time. There are people who hear with their ears and count it a word for someone else, and do not actually eat it themselves. Such a person is left

gaunt, only bones, and wastes away. He works, yet withers and dies. He has no strength and no light in his eyes.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"

Dieting is something done for the body; if you diet spiritually, you die. Those who need a physical diet may do so. But spiritually you must never diet. I do not diet. Instead I exercise. When the spine grows healthy and the muscles are strengthened by exercise, the belly goes in and the body becomes healthy.

Yet there are people who diet spiritually. Enough, they say, this will do—and they will not eat more of the word. Dieting spiritually like that, they have no strength. Having no strength, they say, when is the Lord coming? I wish He would come quickly. But that is not because they truly long for the Lord to come; they say it because they have no strength and feel like dying. If you do not diet spiritually, it does not matter when the Lord comes. Strength overflows, and you want only to do the Lord's work and to fight the spiritual fight. The heart arises: how can I preach the gospel and save even one soul?

So He said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33)*. Eating and living on the daily bread for the righteous work of God, namely the preaching of the gospel—this is what He called our daily bread. We must eat our daily bread every day. We must ruminate on the gospel daily. We ruminate with the eyes, with the heart, and with prayer, yet there are moments when the heart sinks and is bound for a while. Then we gather up the heart again by faith, shake it all off, and live anew. But because we have the flesh, we invariably fall into weakness again. The Lord knows we will be so. Knowing it, He

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came to this earth, received baptism, died on the Cross, and rose from death for us. He did all three of these. And He sent the Holy Spirit. Thus He made us God's people who can never be shaken.

We must receive the remission of sins, confirm this gospel daily, and do the work that pleases God in union with the church, in union with the soldiers of Christ. Working in this part and in that part, even in small parts, we must work in union. Believe surely that this becomes your daily bread. As strength comes when we eat rice, it becomes strength. So we work without ceasing.

There is this much work to do

Some may wonder how a small church works facing the whole world and makes so many books. They may think, that man must be full of inferiority feelings, or he must have caught some disease. But there is so very much work to do. How can a soldier of Christ, how can a worker cast the work aside and play? How could he leave the work and go fishing?

They say the scholars of old dipped their fishing rods in the water and waited all day even when no fish were caught. But we cannot do that. Even worldly work must be done surely—how much more, when God's work is this plentiful, could we do something else? Can a soldier step outside a soldier's duty? With the enemy about to invade, we must prepare in advance; and if there is land that can be widened, we must go out, make it ours, and build up military strength. How could we not do it? He who knows and yet does not do it commits a great sin. It is not the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, but it is a sin to be greatly rebuked, a sin that brings poverty. He becomes destitute for lack of strength and is not well-off even in the flesh.

Therefore we workers, according to the prayer *"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11)* eat the daily bread by believing the gospel, sweep the dust of the heart clean by faith, gain new strength by doing God's work, and eat our daily bread, so that we can work with strength all day long. The more we work, the more strength arises.

These days my wife goes about handing out books, and when I phone her and tell her to rest a little as she goes, she says, with this much work to do, what rest? She says, if she goes home there is only an empty room—what would she do there? Still, lest it be too hard, I urge her to take rests as she works. Truly, when the Holy Spirit is in the heart, one is drawn deep into the work of God. As the word says, the zeal of the LORD will consume me, our Lord also had the heart that was for God the Father and the heart to accomplish His will, giving Himself to receive baptism from John, crying out for three years, and doing that work even unto death on the Cross, though He knew He would die. Thus He saved us.

Thanks for the daily bread He gives every day

Now, the person who has no strength is so because he does not eat the daily bread. The table is always set and there is this much food, yet he does not eat—that is why. Next, what about the person who eats well and has no spiritual defect, yet has no strength? It is because he does not work. The answer is plain. So from now on, when you fellowship, look and see whether a person has strength or not, and if he has none, it is good to set him to work at once rather than only fellowshiping. Only ever fellowshiping is useless. Take him along and set him to work; go out evangelizing together; and if that is not possible, have

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him at least put up gospel flyers.

Before God, we give thanks that God gives us our daily bread every day. With this I close the message. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

A happy life in God's church premised on forgiveness

< Matthew 6:9-13 >

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

The prayer the Lord taught

How are you? Today, too, this many of you have come. As we sang praise together, the words and the melodies are truly beautiful and good. In this church of God everything is beautiful and good. Since brothers and sisters who have received the remission of sins express just what is in their hearts, the sisters are beautiful and the brothers are brave. In days to come as well, when good lyrics or melodies come to mind, write them down and pass them to the minister in charge. If we gather them one by one, we can include them when we print a new hymnbook later.

This week we are looking together at the prayer the Lord taught. Today we want to share the words of Matthew 6:12, *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."*

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The word of God must be unlocked with the key of the truth

If we try to understand all the words of God only literally, we fall into great error and enter destruction. For God spoke with His will contained inside these written letters. The holy word became letters, but if we would unlock this word, there must be the word of truth that becomes its key. And there must be such faith.

This week we are looking at the prayer the Lord taught. Its opening is *"Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:9–12).* If we look at this only as letters, it reads as though we must strive to accomplish something for Him.

So the words in today's verse 12, *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."* also give the impression of teaching that we must keep on being washed of our sins. We get that nuance from these words.

The misunderstanding about *"And forgive us our debts"*

But the key that solves every problem in this Lord's Prayer lies within the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which we believe. Within this faith we can open these words and solve them. We must know this fact without fail. The words we read today, *"And forgive us our debts,"* are a verse that many people misunderstand.

People ask like this: the Lord has already removed all our

sins—why then does the prayer the Lord taught tell us to pray again for our sins to be remitted? Because of this prayer people have fallen into great confusion. How can one say that sin was solved once and for all, and at the same time say that one must keep receiving the remission of sin? Is the prayer the Lord Himself taught at odds with the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Even after receiving the remission of sins, must one repent daily? Even after receiving the remission of sins, are there always actual sins? People fall into such wrong thoughts.

The key to the solution is faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

But the key that solves this problem lies in the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The reason lies within the premised words, *"As we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12)*.

The Lord spoke on the premise that those who have already received the remission of sins can also forgive the sins of others. The person who has received the remission of sins can be generous with and forgive the faults of others as well. The Lord says: if God gave you the gospel of the water and the Spirit and you received the grace of being remitted of all sins once and eternally by believing that gospel, then you ought also to forgive the sins of those who wrong you. As I washed away your sins, so you also must forgive one another. If I removed all your sins and yet you cannot forgive one another, neither can I remit your sins.

Therefore what these words presuppose is to forgive one another. Within the bounds of not committing the sin of standing against the gospel of the water and the Spirit, forgive one another.

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If it is not a matter of slandering and corrupting the true gospel, we must forgive one another. And we must live such an ethical life. Everyone who truly knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit, everyone who believes it, has the experience of being remitted of all his sins. Therefore, even when another person wrongs him humanly, he can forgive. The person who has received the remission of sins can do so.

The one thing that cannot be forgiven: the sin of standing against the gospel

Yet there is one thing that can never be forgiven. It is corrupting and slandering the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The one who pretends to preach the gospel while corrupting it, keeping people from knowing this gospel—doing the work of nullifying what the Lord did—cannot be forgiven.

To forgive such a person is rather a more evil thing. It is like becoming more evil than he and becoming one company with him. The Lord washed away all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the Old Testament He had sins passed on by the laying of hands on the sacrificial offering, and by slaying that sacrifice before the altar of burnt offering He granted the washing of sin. Coming to the New Testament, the Lord Himself came to this earth and removed our sins by the baptism He received from John the Baptist, by the blood He shed on the Cross, and by His resurrection from death, and became our Savior. Therefore, if we try to unlock this Lord's Prayer without faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can fall into great error.

The life that glorifies the Father's name is also possible within faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

It is the same with the words of the Lord's prayer, *"Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name" (Matthew 6:9)*. Only within the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, only by faith, can we give honor and glory to the Father's name. Apart from faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we cannot give holy glory to the Father's name.

Then what is the Lord saying in this part? We cannot do righteous deeds in the flesh, and without believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit we can do nothing—is the Lord then demanding of us a heavy burden we cannot bear? No. God knows everything about us. Therefore it is certainly not so. God first gave us the salvation and the faith by which we can give holy glory to the Father's name. And after that, He told us to live such a life of faith.

The righteous must accept one another

In the same way, within these words, *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."* we the righteous must accept one another without fail. Then why do cases arise where we cannot forgive one another? Forgiveness is already complete. Human faults can be forgiven any number of times.

But acting wickedly by design is different. The case of Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, is such. Ahab opposed Elijah though he knew he was a servant of God, and Jezebel controlled Ahab, making him seize another man's vineyard and keeping him from serving the LORD God. For a person to think himself

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outstanding and able to manipulate others is a very evil thing. The thought, "it would be good to use that person; it would be good to rule that person according to my will," is truly wicked.

In our hearts the selfish nature is deeply ingrained. This nature that makes us up is selfish through and through. There is nothing good in it. But even though we were born with such a nature, a born-again person must be different. Trying to use people, trying only to accomplish one's own will, seeking only to be exalted no matter what becomes of God's good work—this is not right. Human faults can be forgiven, but until that wicked heart turns, it cannot be tolerated. Why? Because on account of such people countless others are wounded and can lose their faith. As Israelites were made to serve Baal instead of the LORD God, they plunge people into enormous sin. So such a thing cannot be tolerated.

But human faults are different. Whatever the wrong, even if he did not know it at the time, if later, after time passes, he realizes, "I did wrong in this part," that is the end of it. Would the Lord not bear such a sin? If only it is not a matter of muddying the gospel of the water and the Spirit, whatever was done in human foolishness or a moment's folly—mistakes and wrongs—can be accepted without limit. The person who has been remitted of all his sins before the Lord must forgive all the human wrongs others do to him. And he can forgive them all. Forgiveness truly happens.

Among those who have received the remission of sins, humanly there is forgiveness for one another, yet there is exactly one sin that cannot be forgiven. It is the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The one who does the work of dragging others to hell can never be forgiven. Until he turns back, he can never be forgiven. But apart from that, it is just as the words say, *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."* Since the Lord

first remitted all our sins, the word is to forgive the sins of those who wrong you in the flesh in matters that are not the truth.

We too live committing actual sins daily in this world. Even the person who has received the remission of sins, even the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, lives committing actual sins daily. Therefore dust can settle on the heart and thoughts can become soiled. At such times the way we turn back is to know that it is wrong and come before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we confirm that the Lord has already removed even all these sins, and give thanks in faith for what the Lord has done, we can become whole. When the Lord has removed all our sins like this, it must not be that those who received the remission of sins cannot forgive one another. The life of the righteous must be a life premised on forgiveness without fail. When there is forgiveness in the heart, even what is humanly disappointing is all forgiven as time passes.

Do you know which sin is the greatest sin?

Do you know which sin among the sins the righteous commit is the greatest? It is the sin of corrupting the gospel. Not only doing so oneself but manipulating others to believe likewise. To lead people not to the way of Christ but to one's own way, in order to fulfill the desires of one's flesh and to be served and exalted. A person who truly believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot do so. Could you? A truly pure person can never do so.

A person's heart must be pure. And we must quickly realize how malicious beings we ourselves are. If we follow the desires of the flesh, we become truly filthy and ugly human beings. Who is the being that can sell his birthright for one bowl of stew? It is

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we ourselves. Therefore we must quickly admit that we are such beings. We must not regard a wicked, crafty, malicious heart as if it were our privilege or our pride.

All people are equal. No one is exceptional. Where one part is lacking, another part excels; where this part excels, that part is feeble. Everyone has strong parts and weak parts together. Therefore, if someone is weak in this part, there is something respectable in that part. We must look at such parts and respect one another.

Concerning the Lord's Prayer, the question that many people abroad ask most often after believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit is exactly this. The Lord taught this prayer, *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."*—if the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth, what on earth is this?—many ask so. So I thought I should deal with this Lord's Prayer concretely, verse by verse. Our saints must know it, and those in this country must know it, so we share this passage together and receive grace.

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit comes to live a life of forgiving one another. I believe that the Lord works in our hearts that way. The person who has ever been remitted of all his sins has the power to forgive what others have done wrong to him. The words *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors."* do not tell us to keep on receiving the remission of sin. They tell us: as befits people remitted of all sins, accept one another's wrongs and forgive one another and live so.

The parable of the one released from a great debt

In the Scriptures, long ago a man owed a master a debt so

great he could never repay it. However he labored all his life, there was no way to pay it. But the master who had lent the money saw his situation, took pity on that servant, and released him from all the debt.

Yet that man, after being released, went out, met a man who owed him a small debt, seized him by the throat, and pressed him—why do you not pay back the money you borrowed? And he tried to accuse him and throw him into prison. Can a person who believes in the Lord do that? If he has plenty, he should release the debt; if the other has nothing, he should wait—that is only right; he must not act like that. The Lord said to this servant, *"You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?" (Matthew 18:32–33) "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses" (Matthew 18:35).*

If we are those released from so much, the lesson is that we must forgive the many wrongs that many people do to us. This is the Lord's command. Today's words are used the same way. We must not misunderstand the words *"And forgive us our debts."* For even our actual sins our Lord has already removed with the baptism He received and the blood of the Cross. Therefore what the Lord requires of us in this verse 12 is that we who have received the remission of sins forgive one another.

The life of the saints who forgive one another and have fellowship

We live forgiving one another. Yet there are people who truly strike from behind and do not turn back, who treat others

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like fools, placing them beneath their eyes and despising them. That must not be. We are not all fools. Those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit are never fools. They are spiritual people, people who have tasted the heavenly gift, the people of heaven, blessed people with heavenly wisdom, faith, and understanding. To think one can sway them according to one's own thought is a great miscalculation and the road to great destruction. Trying to lead the righteous astray, one instead comes to stand in that place oneself. Therefore he must repent and turn back, and what we have done wrong among ourselves we must confess to one another. Saying, "I am sorry in this part; I did wrong," confessing to one another, we must forgive one another within the gospel by which the Lord removed all our sins, within the Lord's love. Only then does fellowship flow between us.

In the Apostles' Creed, too, we confess "the communion of saints." It means fellowship comes about between saints. When we look at the righteous, the fleshly things are visible and the spiritual things are all visible. What is crafty is visible, and what is not is all visible. We see one another plainly, like mirrors. But because we pay that no regard and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—the gospel by which our Lord remitted our sins—what happens? We live in fellowship with one another. We share together, laugh together, serve the Lord together, give one another strength, comfort one another, and exhort one another as we live.

Therefore these words do not tell us to receive the remission of sin daily. They tell us: if you have truly received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, live forgiving one another. The Lord has already given us the faith and the blessing to do so. I believe these words mean: if you have been remitted of all sins by believing in Me—if I have truly

remitted all your sins—then forgive one another and live in harmony. Do you believe?

At one word of confessing the wrong, everything melts

Within our church there are stories I truly hate to bring out. Even to begin speaking of them makes the heart uneasy. If a person has done wrong, saying, “I did wrong; I will not do so again; please guide me,” ends the matter. Is that not so?

To meet a spouse of faith is a truly great blessing. Brothers and sisters who will marry, set this clearly in your hearts. A person’s outward looks are seen for a moment; once married, they are nothing. An old song, too, says that only a fine heart makes a true person. Truly, one must have a fine heart to be a brother; one must have faith to be a brother, and one must have faith to be a sister. A merely glossy exterior is of no use. There are people whose outside is presentable but who know only themselves and do not know serving the Lord together in union. That is nothing to boast of. The true gentleman is the one who serves God well, lives for the gospel, leads his family well, supports his spouse to serve the Lord well, and shields her from every danger.

It is fitting that those who go before cover the weak parts of those who come after, feel with them, share their feelings, comfort them, and build up their faith. Yet there are people who instead exploit such love. That is a truly wicked thing. If something planned has been revealed as wrong, quickly saying, “I am sorry; I will not do so again,” is enough. At that one word everything melts and generosity flows. Why then can that one word not be spoken? To hold out to the end—is that not saying

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that if only this occasion passes, one will do the same again next time? Therefore in the church of God it can never be seen that those who go before torment the saints, wound them, and ruin them spiritually.

The rebuke of a shepherd is love that seeks to save

If you loose one of the shepherd's dogs among the sheep, when the wolf comes it bites and drives it out without mercy. When the flock strays onto a wrong path, it barks and threatens and drives them into the safe way. It is to keep them from falling off the cliff. Likewise, those who go before may at times look heartless. But it is truly to make things turn out well. The rebuking, and the refusing to tolerate, are done because they must be done. It is not to kill anyone. It is rather to save.

Many people overseas and at home, because the prayer the Lord taught contains the phrase *"And forgive us our debts,"* stumble here and believe slowly even while believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore we must be clear. Those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit must accept one another in whatever is not a great problem before God—whatever God says is all right. We must know and believe that we are to live such a life.

I truly give thanks that He gave us the gospel of the water and the Spirit and remitted all our sins. Before I was born again, when someone did harm and made life hard, sediment would remain in my heart and forgiveness would not come. Seeing a person who hindered me though I suffered no loss, I would pretend outwardly to forgive, but a knot remained inside. But after being born again, there is no such thing. If only it is not a matter of opposing or slandering the gospel of the water and the

Spirit, I can pass it over—"people are like that; I knew it would be so." I believe the Lord has given those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit this power to forgive, and has enabled them to show such grace.

"And do not lead us into temptation"

Now let us pass to the next words. It is the part, *"And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13).* Here the Lord's Prayer ends. The following phrase, *"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:13),* is not found in the original text; it is a portion added to the Bible based on later manuscripts..

The person who has received the once-for-all, eternal remission of sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit has nothing to be remitted of daily. Even all those actual sins the Lord has removed within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Do you believe? Therefore those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit must never stumble over this Lord's Prayer. To go only by the letter is to be bound to the letter; to know and believe its meaning is what gives life to the spirit.

What would happen if we followed these words only literally? *"Hallowed be Your name" (Matthew 6:9)*—then it seems we must strive that it be hallowed; *"Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10)*—then it seems we must work ourselves to the bone. *"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11)*—then it seems we must pray daily only, give us this and give us that, and let business prosper. In fact there are countless people in the world who pray like that.

Again, *"And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors"*—then it seems that whatever wrong anyone does, we

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must pass it over unconditionally, saying, "It is all right; I knew it would be so." As if, when the right cheek is struck, we must turn the left, living as beings without frame or center. But in fact it is not so. The righteous have the frame of faith and a center. Therefore we must never be deceived. Whatever people say, holding up this Lord's Prayer, we must remember without fail this premise: *"As we forgive our debtors."* We must know that the word *"we"* here presupposes that the Lord is speaking to those who have received the remission of sins.

The words *"Our Father in heaven" (Matthew 6:9)* are also spoken to the born-again. To apply them to one who is not born again, he must first pray to be remitted of sins and have his sin removed. But the person who has already received the remission of sins must live by faith and give glory to the Father's name. He must live a life that glorifies Him by faith.

"And do not lead us into temptation"

Now let us look at this part, *"And do not lead us into temptation."* Where and because of what do we undergo temptation? Temptation here means undergoing hardship. Why do we undergo hardship? James says that a saint, a righteous person, a servant of God who has received the remission of sins undergoes hardship because of his own desires. *"But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (James 1:14–15)* It is because of the desires and the honor of the flesh that we undergo hardship. Therefore we must pray before the Lord that we may not fall into such wicked hardship.

If we live by faith, if we live following the Lord's will, we

do not fall into temptation. Who mainly falls into extreme hardship? The person who chases the desires of his own flesh. The question is whether we live by the Spirit or by the flesh. We ought first to seek His kingdom and His righteousness and follow after them, and the problem is that we do not.

The Lord said, *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4)*. Yet even after being born again, people are bound by desire to keep only their flesh alive, thinking only of their bodies—what to eat, what to wear—and so they fall into hard straits. It is mainly so with saints and servants of God.

So it was with Naomi. When famine came to Bethlehem, she should have stayed there, but she left it with her husband and went to the land of Moab, and there she went through the hardship of losing her husband. It was because much rain fell there and the crops did well. But God told the people of Israel never to leave the land of Israel. He said He would supply them in season. God never once starved the people of Israel to death. He fed them with signs and wonders, showed grace, and disciplined their faith. But Naomi did not follow faith; to keep only her flesh alive she followed the flesh, and in the end she suffered hardship, fell from faith, and her soul was hurt and her body became destitute.

Live for the gospel as a soldier of Christ

The words *"And do not lead us into temptation"* are so that we may not fall into extreme hardship. To avoid falling into such hardship we must live by faith. It does not end with receiving the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who has received the remission of sins is a

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soldier of Christ. As a soldier he must live for the gospel. Then the Lord adds all these things to him. If we live by faith, He keeps us from falling into such temptation.

Yet among saints and ministers there are those seized by the desire: how shall I be exalted? How shall my flesh, my family, live a guaranteed life? They scheme only to eat well and live well without hardship in days to come over food, clothing, and shelter, and go out following only their own flesh. Those who go out like that fall into temptation. They fall into hardship.

On the other hand, those who in the church believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, become soldiers of Christ, and, though lacking, live for God in things small and great, have the problem of food, clothing, and shelter solved at the least. And in days to come, like the rising sun, God pours out blessing more and more. But those who are anxious only about their flesh's eating and living and go only in that direction become like the setting sun, and at last sell off even their souls and their faith.

If you leave the church of God, you fall into temptation

There are cases where a person who received the remission of sins leaves the church of God to keep only his flesh alive, and leaves the saints and the servants of God. He leaves, drawn by the word that over there they will make him live well. There are also cases where a servant of God leaves this church, goes into the world, founds a church, and corrupts the gospel to draw in many people. If one teaches that believing only in the blood of the Cross leaves no sin, calls people righteous unconditionally, teaches that sinning does not matter, and tries to become a minister who succeeds worldly-wise, that is the road to ruin. He

said, *"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Matthew 5:13).*

For a born-again person to worship together in the church of God, fellowship with the saints and the servants of God, receive prayer and guidance and pray together, and take part as a soldier of Christ in building the kingdom of God—this life is truly a life of great blessing. There is a hymn about a blind man who lived the world in vain, cherished the wish that he might once serve the Lord without sin, and at last met the Lord, served Him, was nurtured in the church, and became one who preaches the gospel to the whole world. This hymn was written by one of the righteous. Such happiness does not belong to ministers only. Saint or minister, it is the same. It is living in the same church, in the kingdom of God, doing the work God has entrusted. Therefore the one who seeks to live dies, and the one who seeks to die lives.

When you set your heart—"here I will die if I die, and here I will live if I live"—God bestows grace. As Ruth, the Moabite Gentile woman, met Boaz and received grace, so grace is received. But if you think in the direction of how your flesh may suffer less, how you may live satisfied and swaggering, how you may be exalted by people, and follow that, you fall into temptation. You fall into hardship, sell off your faith, and die. Therefore we must set every focus on Christ, on God. We must live fitted to the will God has spoken.

This is precisely for our own sake. Not for anyone else but for you and me. To leave the church of God is the same as leaving the kingdom of God. Then one is not supplied with the word of God, the fellowship of hearts is cut off, the heart grows crafty, and Satan the devil builds a house in that heart. Satan the devil begins to work in the heart of the one who left the church

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of God, devising crafty schemes and swaying him at will. Then, without knowing it, he becomes a slave of the devil. However much he once believed the gospel, he cannot possibly win. And whenever he sees the righteous and the church of God, irritation rises for no reason and the urge to oppose surges up inside. We have no need to become such people.

Therefore the Lord tells us: do not fall into temptation—that is, live by faith so as not to fall into temptation. With the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, with the faith that seeks first the righteousness of God, in union with the church of God, as soldiers of Christ, though lacking, we must finish our lives with the purpose of building the kingdom of God. This is the Christian life lived after being born again. If we do not live for this purpose, what remains is nothing but complaints and discontent.

Do not judge people by outward appearance

If we look at God's servants who go before us only with fleshly eyes, we judge them carelessly—how shabby and undignified they look coming down from the pulpit. Failing to see the spiritual and looking only at the fleshly, people despise them and later even challenge them. But the person who judges people by outward appearance is truly foolish.

We are all precious people. We are all soldiers of Christ. Soldiers do not fight alone; they fight together in union. Fighting together, when one fellow soldier dies, you too feel the threat. To think, "my comrade died but I am fine," is a great miscalculation. You must know that when the soldier beside you falls, more enemies pour in and in the end kill you too. That is why my comrade is precious. When a comrade dies on the

battlefield, fighting with bloodshot eyes at the risk of one's life—that is the love of comrades-in-arms.

Spiritually we are soldiers of Christ. The soldiers of Christ are all precious ones. Because we see not by the outward appearance but with the heart and by faith, they are precious. Therefore we respect one another and work in union. Each gives thanks for the work entrusted to him, and while bearing different parts we respect one another and stand up for one another. Because he is there, I too can be. Without him there is no me; without you there is no me; and without me there is no you. It is the same for us all.

Whenever Satan the devil tries to make a person fall away from the kingdom of God, he entices with sweet words. He says, "I will guarantee you everything," making it seem that if you only go there, great treasure is waiting. But though the devil speaks sweetly at first, once you go there he demands a price without fail. "I will do this for you, so you pay this price," he says. Even after paying such an enormous price, you can never live well. You only ever do the devil good; you yourself can never live well.

The faith that overcomes the world, the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Since He said, *"And do not lead us into temptation,"* we must not fall into temptation. We must live by faith, living lives that glorify God, comforting one another and being comforted even in our lack, encouraging one another, and sharing together the worthwhile fruits of righteousness. This is the life the Lord required. It is to live by faith. This Lord's Prayer, from beginning to end, is entirely the word to live by faith.

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Therefore we must pray. And not only pray—we must have faith. The faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the faith that overcomes this world. First John chapter 5 says: *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4) "This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood" (1 John 5:6)*. Do you think this faith is ordinary faith? It is the faith that enters the kingdom of heaven, the faith that can open the gate of the kingdom of heaven. This faith you and I hold is never ordinary faith. It is no laughable gospel. Do you believe so?

I count our saints and co-workers, each and every one, truly precious. Seen in the flesh, I and they are all alike. But spiritually I come to confess from the heart that they are all precious. Why? If we do not serve the gospel together in union, how can we preach the gospel to the whole world? If each of us does not live for the Lord, for the gospel, how can those countless souls hear the gospel and gain new life? It can never be.

We must not underestimate ourselves. We must never look lightly on this church of God. Though few in number, we are preaching the gospel facing the whole world. This is not because we have fleshly ability. It is because the Lord gave us the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made us receive the remission of sins, because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts giving faith and the word, and because He has made us soldiers of Christ and set us to work. Because God can work through us, we are this precious.

We preach the gospel with the wisdom the Lord gives

What are the soldiers of Christ like? Only one who fights

well can be a warrior, but as for soldiers—everyone, whoever he is, when the order to charge falls, takes up his spear and advances unconditionally. Though from above they pour boiling water and oil and set fires, and great rocks roll down, seeing it plainly with their eyes they advance. Paying such great sacrifices they seize the fortress and win the war—we see this in stories of war.

But we do not fight so recklessly. We make e-books, paper books, and audiobooks, and preach the gospel. With so small a number, how effectively we are preaching the gospel! I believe this is all wisdom God has given.

When we send these books, we put evangelism materials in with them. We ask the person who requested the book to share these materials with those who truly need them, and send them together. Then that person shares them again with others, and the effect is truly good. Though we did no separate campaign, the most visitors in a day come to our website. It is because God gives wisdom, and because the church of God is here and the kingdom of God is here, that there is such grace.

The happy life within the church of God

The word Bethlehem means the house of bread. If you are in the house of bread, however great the famine, the son of that house does not starve to death. But if, enticed by promises of good things outside, you leave the house of bread to get that one small thing and are dragged here and there, you at last fall into the temptation of losing the house and being unable to return. The word is: do not fall into such temptation.

I too grew up truly destitute before I met the Lord. In childhood I was so poor that my wish was to eat my fill of a bowl

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of white rice. But since meeting the Lord I live well. Now I give no thought to food. I do not try to store up my own property. Our ministers were all so. Not trying to store up their own property—go here and here is my house, go there and there is my house—today here and tomorrow there they lived preaching the gospel. Have not our saints also gone back and forth between one another's homes, sharing life together?

To fall into temptation is to undergo hardship because one leaves the church of God and the kingdom of God, chasing the desires of one's flesh. Temptation is the learned expression; simply put, it is undergoing hardship. When we serve the gospel together in union within the kingdom of God, share delicious things together, laugh together and work together, how happy this is! In this world, however many children a person bears and raises, could he form such a family as this—so many members united in heart, serving God the Father, living purely? No one in this world is as happy as we are. We are truly happy people.

If our ministers did not serve the gospel and went into the world to live only for themselves, could we come out to a retreat with such leisure and share grace together? However one struggles out in the world, could he enjoy in his heart the fullness of righteousness and a worthwhile life? No. Yet God has made us live this blessed life. Why then would anyone walk into temptation of his own accord; why would he enter hardship of his own accord? If we live by faith within what God empowers and blesses, we live and pray for the work of building the kingdom of God, ask when the flesh lacks something, challenge by faith, and go forward with the church. Then God gives the early and the latter rain in season. Therefore we have no need to live in hardship. Even if we truly do undergo hardship, we undergo it for the Lord, and we must live happy and worthwhile lives by faith in Christ, in the kingdom of God.

God has given us grace to live such a life. He came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, died on the Cross, and rose from death to save us. And He made us soldiers of Christ, placed us within the kingdom of God, blessed us here, made us do worthwhile work here, and appointed us to finish this earthly life here. Believe that this is God's will; believe that living like this, doing righteous work within the church and the kingdom of God—building the kingdom of God—is the blessed way God has given us. Do you understand? Hold that faith firmly and live so. I close the message. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The heart follows to where the treasure is

< Matthew 6:19-24 >

"'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 'The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 'No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Treasures laid up on earth leave us in the end

Jesus spoke of two places for laying up treasure. One is the earth and the other is heaven. Treasures laid up on earth moth and rust destroy, and thieves take them. Moths eat cloth and metal rusts, and even a tightly locked house cannot completely stop a thief's intrusion. However carefully a person guards them, the things of the earth change, wear out, and disappear. And when we die, we must leave behind even what remains.

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The Lord did not call the fact of owning riches itself sin. For living we need a house, food, and clothing, and material things are needed also for helping others and preaching the gospel. The problem is riches taking the place of the treasure. When a person believes riches to be the safest refuge and makes gaining and keeping them the final purpose of life, riches are no longer a tool but become the master.

The treasures of the earth promise a person safety but cannot keep that promise to the end. With much money one can live somewhat conveniently, but it cannot stop death and cannot wash the sins of the heart. A good house can keep off wind and rain, but it cannot hide the soul from God's judgment. A high position can move many people, but it cannot change a sinner into a righteous person. We must distinguish between what is useful in the world and what can save the soul.

People easily miss what does not disappear while clutching what will disappear. Thinking they will feel secure if they gather more, they run without resting; but as possessions increase, the fear of losing them can grow with them. To keep riches a person may cast away conscience, use people, and even be robbed of the time to serve God, and still think he is living wisely. But the Lord says plainly: treasures laid up on earth suffer harm and are stolen.

Therefore do not calculate the worth of your life only by the numbers left in your bankbook. More important than how much you have owned is what you have used it for. If you spend all your time, talent, and material things only on feeding and clothing your own body, all that labor ends when the life of the flesh ends. But the work of serving so that one soul hears the true gospel, receives the remission of sins, and gains eternal life—the moth and rust of the earth cannot destroy that.

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The heart follows to where the treasure is

Jesus said, *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21)* Treasure and heart are not separated. Where a person counts something truly precious, there his thoughts stay; there he spends his time, gives his strength, and uses his material things. More than what one says with the lips is important, what one most grieves to lose and most rejoices to gain reveals that person's treasure.

The person who counts riches most precious judges everything by the standard of money. Seeing someone who needs help, he calculates the loss first; seeing the work of the gospel, he asks first what profit returns to him. If following the word seems likely to reduce his possessions, he puts the word off. Though he speaks of God outwardly, his heart has gone where his riches are. For the treasure drags the heart after it.

On the contrary, the person who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit as the most precious treasure counts precious the work of souls receiving the remission of sins. When a door opens to preach the gospel he rejoices, and he uses his time, skills, and material things so that others can hear the word of salvation. It is not because he does not know the value of money. It is because he knows the value of eternal life, which money cannot buy. It is because he knows that using what decays for the fruit that does not decay is the truly wise use.

We must not lower the Lord's word about laying up treasures in heaven into the notion that giving many offerings opens a bigger property account in heaven. No one buys salvation by offering money. If one gives material things to exalt his own name or to gain greater worldly blessing, he is still seeking earthly profit. The life that lays up treasures in heaven is the life that counts precious the souls and the gospel work God counts

precious, and uses what it has received according to God's will.

Do you want to know where your heart is? Examine your week. See what you thought about longest, what made you rejoice or despair most, and for what you spent most unsparingly. The heart moves along what it counts as treasure. It is possible to say with the lips that the gospel is precious while the heart is actually bound to worldly possessions. We must admit that fact honestly.

But after examining our hearts, merely renewing our resolve does not solve the root problem. Man was born in the darkness of sin and condemnation and cannot move his heart to heaven by his own strength. First we must receive the true treasure that came from heaven. When we know how perfect and precious this salvation is—the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has given—that treasure changes the direction of the heart.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit brightens the eyes of the heart

Having spoken of treasure and heart, Jesus went on to speak of the eye and the whole body. If the eye is good the whole body is bright, and if the eye is bad the whole body is dark. The eye lets the body see which way to go. If the eye is dark, one stumbles even where there is a road; if it is bright, one discerns where to go. So, according to what the eyes of the heart see and believe, a person's thoughts, choices, and direction of life change.

What brightens the eyes of the heart is not positive self-suggestion. Nor is it forcibly repeating that one has no sin when one has sin. The light of the gospel comes from the event of salvation God actually accomplished. As the words say, *"For it*

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is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:6), God brightens our hearts by making known the truth Jesus Christ accomplished.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the clear content of that light. Through the baptism Jesus received from John, all the sins of mankind were passed on to His body. After that event John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)* Jesus received and personally bore not only the past sins of a few people but all the sins of the world. So, as the Lamb of God who bore sin, He went toward the Cross.

Because of those sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, Jesus Christ was judged on the Cross in the place of sinners. By shedding His blood and actually dying He paid the wages of sin. The words *"Christ died for our sins" (1 Corinthians 15:3)* make plain that the death of the Cross was not a mere model of sacrifice but the judgment of atonement for sin. And the Lord was buried and rose from death. As the words say, *"He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4),* He actually rose and defeated sin and death.

Thus, through the baptism Jesus received from John, all the sins of the world were passed on to Him. Carrying those sins the Lord was nailed to the Cross, received in our place the judgment we should receive, shed His blood and actually died. But He did not stay bound in death; He rose again. By all this saving work He fulfilled all the righteousness of God and completed our salvation. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit is washed of all sins at once, receives the Holy Spirit, and is born again. The believer is a righteous person with no sin in his heart and a child of God. This is not a brightness made by

human mood but the brightness that comes from the fact God has completed.

The heart that believes its sin remains as it is is caught in the darkness of condemnation. However much religious zeal it stirs up, it cannot come boldly before God, and it piles up works to cover its sin. But the person who has received the remission of sins by believing this gospel sees the word that the Savior actually removed all sins. Even though weakness remains in the flesh, he does not interpret that weakness as the failure of salvation. He does not make his own deeds his light; he makes the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished his light.

That the eyes of the heart are bright does not mean boasting that one is perfect. It is believing that though there is nothing good in one's flesh, the salvation the Lord accomplished is perfect. The righteous person who has received the remission of sins can err in the flesh and must acknowledge his wrongs and turn back. But he does not thereby return to the status of a sinner. Within the completed gospel he sees his weakness clearly and follows the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This bright heart makes us preach the gospel to other souls. The person who is not even sure whether his own sins are gone cannot clearly shine the light of the remission of sin on another. But the person who believes that the Lord bore not only his own sins but the sins of the world can preach boldly. Even if language and talent are lacking, if the content of the gospel is clear, he can shine the light. The power of evangelism comes not from human brilliance but from the bright heart that believes the truth.

Therefore, before trying to brighten another's heart, first shine this gospel on your own heart. Do not grow dark peering into your own deeds; look at the salvation the Savior completed. If worldly desire covers the heart, acknowledge it before the word, and confirm by faith the remission of sin already received

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and the standing of the righteous. Do not hide the lamp under a vessel; let the light of the gospel govern your thoughts and choices.

God and riches cannot be served together

Having spoken of treasure, heart, and eye, the Lord at last brings to light the question of the master. He said, *"No one can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24)*. This is not advice that if a person draws up his schedule well he can serve two masters fairly. The Lord declared it impossible. If you love the one you hate the other, and if you value the one you despise the other.

Using riches and serving riches are different. The person who uses riches earns and spends according to God's will, and when needed he gives for the gospel and his neighbor. The person who serves riches places even the word of God under the standard of profit. If loss is expected he abandons the truth, and if he can gain more he sacrifices conscience. With his lips he says God is his Master, but the actual right of decision belongs to riches.

The heart that tries to serve two masters together in the end darkens the light of the gospel. It thinks it will neither lose God nor give up the desires of the world. It will obey the word—but only within the bounds where its possessions do not shrink; it will serve the gospel—but only within the bounds that do not harm its honor and comfort. But that is not wisdom harmonizing two masters; it is unbelief that despises God.

Nor is it only the rich who serve riches. Even with little, the whole heart can be gripped by money. Conversely, one entrusted with much can serve God as Master and use those material things well. Therefore, before judging by another's possessions, examine the master of your own heart. See at whose command

you move fastest, what you fear most to lose, and for what you yield the truth.

The word to serve God alone as Master does not mean to abandon your occupation and throw off the responsibilities of living. It is necessary to work honestly, care for your family, and prepare for the future. Only, do not do all those things in the manner of worshiping riches. If God is the Master, we carry out even our occupation honestly before God, receive our income with thanks, and use our possessions as things entrusted. Riches can be a good servant, but they can never be a savior or a master.

Your sins were not passed on to riches. Riches were not judged in your place on the Cross, did not shed blood and die, and did not rise from death. The One who delivered you from sin is only the Savior Jesus Christ, to whom your sins were passed through the baptism He received from John. Why then would you lean on riches, which cannot save, as if they were a savior, and push back God, who gave you new life? Throw away the thought that you can serve two masters. Value first God, who saved you.

When God is served as Master, riches become a tool of the gospel

Using material things, time, and talent for the work of the gospel is not a price paid to maintain salvation. It is not that the remission of sin is preserved by giving many offerings, nor that the standing of God's child is maintained by preaching the gospel. Salvation Jesus Christ has already completed. The service of faith is the fruit borne in gratitude by the person who has received that completed salvation.

Only when this distinction is clear can we serve gladly. If we

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think we are paying the price of salvation, however much we give it is insufficient, and in the end we come to calculate our own merits. But if we believe the grace received freely, it becomes clear according to whose will we use what we have. Since God has entrusted material things, health, and time, with them we care for our families, help those in hardship, and preach the gospel to souls. Riches used like that are not a master dominating people but a tool serving life.

Laying up treasures in heaven is not a work only grand people can do. Praying for those who preach the gospel, giving time so that one person can hear the word, helping the channels of the gospel with one's own skills—these too are precious. Serving someone in need without exalting one's own name is also a fruit of faith. Do not compare one another by amounts and the size of roles. God knows what He has entrusted to each person, and He sees the heart and the labor used in faith.

We must ask without fail: what will what I am gathering leave in the end? While my possessions increase, is my heart not drifting far from God? Is what I have opening the way of the gospel, or is it holding me back from following that gospel? Harder than earning money is not setting money on the master's seat. That is why we must keep examining our hearts by the word.

The person who knows the value of the gospel does not waste needed material things irresponsibly. Rather, he manages them more honestly. He discerns where to spend and where to save, restrains his own desires, and uses them in faith for the work that saves souls. It is also not right to indulge vanity or spend planlessly in the name of laying up treasures in heaven. The person who serves God as Master handles what is entrusted faithfully and wisely.

Also, do not be discouraged when the fruit of service is not soon visible. There are times when we cannot reap the moment

we sow. We may deliver one book of the word, pray for one soul, and labor for the work of the gospel, yet no change may be visible at once. But the imperishable gospel itself is not in vain. Do not force results to boast of your own achievement; sow faithfully, believing that God will work.

Live as those who have received the most precious treasure

The treasure, the heart, the eye, and the master of which Jesus spoke are not separate lessons. What one takes as treasure sets the direction of the heart; the eye of that heart brightens or darkens the whole life; and at last it reveals whom one serves as master. Therefore do not try to fix only the direction of life a little; first examine what you count most precious.

If the world's riches are most precious, the heart is bound to the earth, the eye sees only gain and loss, and riches become the master. But if you receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit as the most precious treasure, the heart looks to the salvation God accomplished, the eye sees the value of souls, and you serve God as Master. This difference shows not in what one says on Sunday but in what one lives for on weekdays.

You have received a treasure money cannot buy. Through the baptism Jesus received from John, all the sins of the world were passed on to His body; carrying those sins He was judged on the Cross in our place, shed His blood and died, and by rising from death He completed the remission of sin and eternal life. The person who has believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit has received the Holy Spirit, been born again, and become a child of God. Where is there anything more precious than this? Do not despise this eternal treasure because of things that decay,

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are stolen, and must be left behind.

Now brighten the eyes of your heart. Bring the heart darkened by gazing at your possessions before the truth of this gospel. Do not pretend to hate riches while loving them more inwardly, and throw away also the lie that you can serve God and riches together as masters. Put riches in their place and set God on the Master's seat. Let your time, material things, and talent become channels of the gospel that bring souls to life.

Do not lay up treasures only on earth. The heart also follows to where the treasure is. When the eyes of the heart grow dark, one loses the way even with much in hand. But when we clearly believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished, the whole of life gains light. Do not try to serve two masters. Love and value God alone, who saved you from sin and death, and live as those who have received the most precious treasure. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness

< Matthew 6:33 >

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

Our Lord said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33)*. What is the work we Christians must truly do as we live on this earth? And what must we set our hearts on first of all? It is precisely the work of seeking the kingdom of God. It is right to seek His righteousness and to seek His kingdom first. The Lord said so, and it is indeed right.

In this world there are truly many affairs. And when we do some work, we sink into that work. When the work is hard to manage, we say, just a little more, just a little more, and become wholly absorbed. Then we come to neglect the work of seeking the righteousness of God. In the end we may even lose that righteous work.

Our Lord knows well that we humans are weak. So He gives us this word. We must note that God says "first" here. What we must set our hearts on first is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For this gospel, for the kingdom of God, for the salvation of souls, we must think first and pray first. And we must pursue that work and go forward.

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Our weakness that easily sinks into worldly affairs

How is it with you in your working life? While studying, and doing your various tasks, how is it? When you are engaged in family life, work life, or school life—things that are not wholly serving the gospel—where do you sink? Are there not times when the heart is wholly caught in that work? We sink into what we are learning, and the heart is held fast in that place.

So the Scriptures tell us to love God with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength. But truly doing so is no easy thing. It is truly hard.

Of course, the people of the Spirit, the people of God, still think of what is spiritual even while carrying such things. They continue in prayer and carry on the spiritual work as well. Because the Holy Spirit is in us, we can do so. The person without the Holy Spirit cannot do these two together.

Yet even the person who has the Holy Spirit, when he actually tries various works, undergoes difficulty. Until he finishes that work, he finds it truly hard to carry both works together. If he spends all his strength on the one side, no strength remains to use on the other. Thus he comes rather to a state of needing to be supplied.

We must think first of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Therefore our Lord said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."* Whatever work we do, we must think first of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must think first of the work of saving souls. We must do the work of serving the gospel

first of all, and then think of and do the remaining work.

If we push the work for God's gospel behind and do the world's work first, what happens? As I said before, we cannot do both. Because we spend all our strength on the work done first. Therefore what we must think of first is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Also the work of expanding the kingdom of God. We must think of this work first and bear the remaining works as secondary.

There is a fitting way for us to live before the Lord. Being human, we easily pour all our strength into the work we do first. Therefore we must live thinking of the work of the gospel before any work of the world.

Only when we think of the gospel first can we serve the Lord

I myself have gone through such things. When I sink into work, sleep does not come. Once I begin a task, I must finish and settle it, even staying up all night, before sleep comes. If I do not settle it, sleep does not come. My disposition is hasty and angular, so it is hard to call it a good disposition. But when I tried to serve the Lord after finishing off some work, I could not serve the Lord at all. To speak honestly, it simply did not work.

Even when we do the world's work, we must think of the Lord's work first. Then, when we calmly carry on the world's work, God helps. And that work also is accomplished. But if we try to serve the gospel after finishing all the world's work, honestly, it does not go well.

We must keep this in mind. Though we lead a working life and a social life, in our thoughts and hearts and prayers the gospel of the water and the Spirit must come first. We must think

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first and pray first for souls, and then carry on our social life. Do you see this? Let us all answer with Amen.

That is right, and so we ought to do. Therefore, whatever we do, we must think of God's work first. And we must think first of your own soul and of the many souls. Train yourself to do God's work first before anything, and then do the world's work. Then I believe God will bless all the works we do. Think first and set your heart first. Do God's work first, and then bear the other work.

The life lived for the gospel is the worthwhile life

If, living in this world, we must do the world's work, it is not because it is fun. We do it because for the gospel we cannot but do it. If we work on this earth only because of money, in fact it is no fun. The work itself may be interesting, but if we work only for money, it is too great a waste to pour in our time and our minds.

But for the gospel of the water and the Spirit we gladly carry on social life and working life. It is so with me in my daily life. If it is for the gospel—for the righteousness of God—nothing is begrudged. Whether staying up all night or whatever, the heart is glad and joyful. But when something seems not to be for the gospel, there is little fun in it and no energy arises.

If we stay idle, time just flows by in vain. Yet even if we let it pass so, pouring time into what has nothing to do with the gospel feels truly wasteful. I see it in myself. If it is for the gospel and for one soul, that work is enjoyable. Not noticing the night passing, in good spirits, unconcerned though the body is weary, I go on. But if what I am doing is not for the gospel—not for the righteousness of God and the saving of souls for the kingdom of

God—no desire to do it arises at all.

Our brothers and sisters will have the same heart that is in me. Those who have the Holy Spirit all have the same heart. Then with what heart and what thought should you carry on your social life? Should not you and I do that work for the gospel? We need material things for the gospel. And we must go out to the workplace to meet souls. Is that not why we go out to work?

The Scriptures say, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).* Truly, should not all of it be done for the gospel of the water and the Spirit? I believe that is fitting.

The souls God attaches to us

God attaches souls to the places where you carry on your working and social life. Among them, some draw near and do not leave. Others seem to draw near and then drift away. It is precisely for such souls that we carry on working life and sometimes even move house often.

I too have a matter I pray over personally and would like to set before you as a prayer topic. I want to pray for the owner of the house where I live as a tenant. Please pray together. He is a young man not yet thirty.

Once I had fellowship with him. At that time he opened his heart a great deal first. I did not put on airs because I am a pastor. Together with a brother I cleaned up the long-neglected, untidy surroundings of the house and drew near as a neighbor.

When I did so, the door of his heart seemed to open a little. At first he looked at our church and was wary, wondering if it might be a heresy. But I did not trouble to defend myself. I simply did what I had to do and lived on.

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Then one day he poured out what was in his heart. One church seemed like superstition, and another leaned too much on doctrine alone, he said. Also, when he read the Bible and asked about what he did not know, they gave no answer and instead treated him arrogantly. So it was hard even to ask questions. For him to tell his inner heart like this—does it not mean the door of his heart has opened? Only, lest he be shocked if I tell everything at once, I am sharing it little by little.

These days the condition of my throat is much improved. So delivering the word has become easier, and this too is a thing to be thankful for.

Let us pray for one another's souls in daily life

Above all, I want to ask your prayers for that one soul. Pray together that that soul may be saved. Do you not also have souls for whom you would ask prayer like this? When we gather together, let us each set out our prayer topics and pray together.

Faith is precisely daily life. The heart that prays before the Lord in daily life and seeks to follow Him—that is faith. We must follow the Lord as we live. Do you have topics or souls you want to pray for? One brother among us says he wants to pray for his mother.

That is right. To pray for one's own mother's soul—that is faith in daily life. We do not only listen to the word. Praying alone does not go well, so when we gather we must set out our prayer topics and pray. That is truly our life of faith. We must know one another, and lay each other's circumstances before God and pray together. First seek the kingdom of God, and then keep sharing topics and praying for one another for the work of saving souls. This is precisely seeking first the righteousness of

God.

Now at this time let us set out our prayer topics together and pray. Since I and that brother have set out our topics, let us first pray for the salvation of those souls. After this prayer, please share your prayer topics too, one or two at a time. We will then pray together for those souls. After that we will sing praise and close. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble

< Matthew 6:34 >

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Our Lord spoke like this: *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:34).*

Worry is the greatest enemy of the righteous

For the righteous living the life of faith, the greatest enemy is worry. That worry is not today's worry. It is worry directed at the future, worry that goes on without end.

Why do we the righteous worry? It is because of our own lack. Because of our own weakness. We look at our present selves, think of tomorrow and the day after, and worry greatly.

When we look at ourselves, it is only natural that worry arises.

But here is the problem. Looking at our present lacking selves, we conclude in advance that there is no possibility of becoming better in the future. We look at ourselves and forecast our future selves. Worrying like that, we may even give up our faith and let go of the life of faith.

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Why is that? Because each person knows himself best. So he reckons there is no guarantee that he will become better tomorrow or in the far future. When there is no guarantee that our own selves will improve, when no hope is visible, we fall into worry. This worry covers over our whole faith. Finally it makes us want to give up the life of faith.

"Sufficient for the day is its own trouble"

But our Lord spoke like this: *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:34).*

Our present lack—we have only to undergo that lack day by day. Tomorrow's matters we may worry about tomorrow. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

When we fall into worry, we come to look only at our lacking parts. What happens when worry soaks into our hearts? As a little leaven leavens the whole lump, that small worry swells our whole heart. Among us the righteous there is no one without parts that worry him and parts that are weak. Everyone has them.

Everyone has them; the problem is the size of the worry. Let us say each of us is 100. Suppose the part that worries us is 10. Suppose that when we look at ourselves, there is about 10 of what is worrying.

If there is 10 of present worry, a person thinks there will be another 10 to worry about in the future. So he adds 10 to 10 and makes 20, and falls into the delusion that he is a person made up entirely of problems and worries.

And he thinks like this: I am lacking and weak. I only ever do wrong. I can do nothing. The future cannot become better either. Thus the 10 percent devours the whole 90 percent.

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And so he makes himself out to be a person who can do nothing, a helpless person.

But what did our Lord actually say here? He said, *"Tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

Do not pull the future's worry into the present

What is the meaning of our Lord's word here? Is there lack? Then on that day, because of that lack, undergo the trouble. That is sufficient. Do not pull forward and worry in advance over what will be lacking in the future. Do not drag the future's worry and the future's trouble into the present, shoulder it all, and suffer from now on.

What is the meaning contained in this word? If, taking ourselves as 100, there is 10 percent that is worrying, then we need only undergo, day by day, the worry and trouble over that 10 percent.

As we live on, there cannot be no worries. There cannot be no weak parts. It cannot be that we ourselves have no weak parts. Everyone has them.

So when weakness appears from time to time, only on the day that weakness appears need we undergo that trouble. That is sufficient.

But what happens if we pull all the worry forward in advance? To the present worry of 10 percent we add the future worry of 10 percent, and add again the more distant future's worry of 80 percent. Dragging it all in like that, we make it 100 percent, and then say: I am a wreck who can do nothing; I can no longer lead the life of faith.

Do not despair like this, do not abandon yourself—this is

what our Lord was saying.

The Apostle Paul, too, was within his own lack

You and I are righteous. But we are not perfect. Every person has weaknesses, and every person has lacks.

When we first undergo that lack, it is bearable. Why? Because there is hope. Because there is the hope that we will be changed in days to come, it is bearable.

But leading the life of faith a long time does not make the lack disappear. Even the Apostle Paul could not say he had no lack.

Rather, the Apostle Paul confessed like this: *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)* The Apostle Paul, too, was within his own lack.

Therefore we must not drag in even the future's worries about ourselves, shoulder that heavy load, and just collapse. If there is a part that worries us, a weak part, something for which we must undergo trouble, we need only undergo the trouble on the day it appears. Do not give up the life of faith or crumble by yourself because you are lacking—this was the word of our Lord's exhortation.

"Tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

Much of the life we live is for the Lord. The righteous surely live for righteousness. If we are saints living in union with the church of God, and if we are servants of God, however many lacking parts we have, we all live for the Lord.

Nevertheless there are things that worry us and parts that are weak. Because of those weak parts we undergo trouble. And we think: I can never be changed; I cannot overcome myself. When

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we come to know that we cannot be changed, we may even give up the life of faith.

We may give up like that. But our Lord says: “Why do you worry over that? Do not worry about tomorrow. Do not pull forward and worry that such things will happen again tomorrow.”

When such a thing comes then, we undergo trouble because of it then. The trouble is sufficient for one day. It must not be that we pull the worrying things forward and the present self collapses, or that we shoulder too heavy a load of worry and abandon the life of faith in despair, or grieve and lose strength.

You and I all have lacks. We all have weaknesses. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble; there is no need to shoulder even the future’s troubles all at once and fall.

Perfectionism is a scheme of Satan the devil

The person fallen into perfectionism looks ahead at his future self. And he gives up in advance a road he has not even walked. He looks at himself and makes his calculation. Knowing what kind of person he is, he says: “I am a person utterly unfit for the Lord’s work and the Lord’s kingdom. The life of faith never suited my constitution in the first place.”

That is a word spoken looking only at the 10 percent within himself. Saying, “I do not fit,” he tries to give up the life of faith.

This is a scheme of Satan the devil. It is clearly a scheme of Satan the devil.

The Lord tells us not to fall into that trap. “Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Do not worry about tomorrow, about what will happen tomorrow. Tomorrow will worry about its own things. The present worry and the present suffering are sufficient as that day’s trouble, one day’s trouble.”

Our Lord has removed all our sins. By receiving baptism from John, the Lord took on Himself all the sins of the world. And on the Cross He received the judgment as the price of those sins, shed His blood and died, and rose again in three days, completing our salvation. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because the Lord has already borne all our sins, even though we are not a perfect people in the flesh, it is all right. When there is truly something to undergo trouble over, the trouble of that day is sufficient.

Engrave deeply the words of Matthew 6:34

We must engrave deeply and listen well to these words of Matthew 6:34. The more deeply a person thinks about himself, the more righteous he is, the better he must heed these words of our Lord.

We must heed well the Lord's word not to worry about tomorrow. It must not be that, worrying about tomorrow while looking at ourselves, we give up the life of faith.

If I am lacking today, I undergo a little trouble today; and if something lacking happens again tomorrow, I undergo a little more trouble tomorrow. That is how it should be, and we must not, like a perfectionist, conclude, "Ah, I am hopeless," and become like Judas, who hanged himself and died. We must not become such foolish saints, such foolish workers.

Do you see? Do you understand what I am saying?

Do you actually have parts that worry you for the future, for tomorrow? Or not? No—you have them. Worrying while looking at oneself is the greatest worry.

Because we are human, and all the more because we are righteous, we worry much.

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If we worry about tomorrow, we die. We die in the present. Without even living tomorrow, we die today.

What wearies us and makes us fall in our faith is worry—the worry directed at tomorrow's matters.

This worry is the worry one hides in the heart and undergoes alone, unable to tell anyone. It is worry over one's own weakness, worry lest such a thing happen again tomorrow, worry that keeps arising over one's own lack.

This one cannot tell anyone. And one shoulders it alone. But to shoulder it alone and collapse by oneself is not the Lord's will.

We are travelers passing through the world

We are people going toward that heavenly city. As it appears in the book The Pilgrim's Progress, we are travelers. The Apostle Peter also told us to live the life of sojourners. We are travelers passing briefly through this world.

A traveler need only undergo, day by day, the trouble he meets that day. To pull forward the troubles to come, undergo them all at once, and collapse under that weight is not wise.

We too must cry out like this in our hearts: *"Tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."* We too must acknowledge this.

It is true. The Lord's word is the truth. Yes—when trouble comes upon me, I undergo that day's trouble day by day; to pull forward what lies in the future and suffer it in advance is not wise. Our Lord Himself taught me this.

Therefore, according to this word of the Lord, if God allows us trouble day by day, we undergo it on the day He allows it. We do not know what will happen tomorrow. But we must know clearly the fact that we do not always live lives that go against

the Lord and His will.

We the righteous live at least ninety percent following the Lord's will. Only about ten percent is buried in our own weakness. Everyone is buried so. We must not be put to death by it. Nor may we take our own lives.

"Tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." It is sufficient.

Do you believe? Do you have trouble? Do you have worry? If you have, undergo that day's trouble on that day. Then it is over. Tomorrow is another new day.

I say this word to you, to the men and women servants of God: *"Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."* How great a truth this is! Is it not so?

Do not become like Judas Iscariot, who died by his own hand

If our Lord had not spoken this word, what would have become of us? Leading the life of faith for a while, we would look at our weak parts, pull that weakness forward, drag in even the thought of what we might do in the future, shoulder it all, and die. We would die in the present.

What is that like? It is like Judas Iscariot. Judas betrayed Jesus, and threw the thirty pieces of silver into the temple (the sanctuary). Then he rushed out, tied a rope to a beam, and hanged himself on it, saying, "I am one who deserves to die like this," and took his own life.

That is not the Lord's will. Dying by one's own hand—taking responsibility for everything of oneself by oneself—is not doing well before the Lord.

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The Lord said, *"Sufficient for the day is its own trouble" (Matthew 6:34)*. Our life is full of worry and imperfect. Such is our life. If, being imperfect, we must suffer, then we suffer on the day that imperfection appears. Do not pull it forward and suffer in advance and collapse by yourself, and do not become a fool who, worrying over the future, gives up the faith of the present.

One must not become one's own master over oneself. To feel one's lack more and more as one leads the life of faith—that is rather what is right. Yet we must not worry in advance over tomorrow's matters, over what may happen to ourselves tomorrow. Then is then, and the present is the present. Now is now.

The Lord has saved us out of worry

In fact I have already given you this whole message. If I say more, it is only repetition. When I preach, I deliver exactly one thing. If I do much, I deliver two. If you grasp just one rightly, I count that sermon a success. So even if I speak further, it only repeats.

We truly cannot help being so. You cannot help it, and I cannot help it. We are beings who by nature would embrace tomorrow's worries and die. But our Lord has saved such people as us by the word of God.

"Tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Our Lord has saved us out of worry, out of imperfection. He has saved you and me. Is it not so?

Those who give up the life of faith pull forward tomorrow's matters, worrying while looking at themselves, and give up the life of faith. The possibility is truly great that many such people

will arise in days to come. So our Lord says: *"Tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."* We need only undergo it day by day.

Whether because of our own lack, or because the Lord allows us to suffer persecution or undergo trouble, we undergo it on that day. He tells us not to pull it forward and worry excessively. It is the same with our own weakness.

Our God has not saved us from sin only. He has saved us out of worry as well. Jesus received baptism from John and so carried all our sins, was judged on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again, delivering us completely from sin. The Lord who saved us by this gospel of the water and the Spirit has now delivered us also from the burden of worry.

If you and I did not have this word today, what would become of us? People who would crumble in the life of faith, saying, "Ah, it is over now; now I am dead," will arise in numbers at this time when the day of the Lord's coming draws near—so I see it. For the more chaotic the world becomes and the harder it is to live, the more our lacks are exposed.

You must never let worry about tomorrow break down your today. Worry about tomorrow's matters tomorrow, and live today by faith. And believe firmly the word, *"Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

Trouble, too, does not last forever. For us who have received the remission of sins, worry does not stay on either. As the day is clear, then overcast, as rain comes and then clears, so we are neither always fleshly nor always spiritual. We are not always lacking, nor do we always go against the Lord's will. Though lacking, we live following the Lord's will.

And all our lack the Lord has borne entirely. Live believing the Lord. And live believing the word of the Lord.

We truly give thanks before the Lord, who has spoken such

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words to us and held us so that we do not fall into worry. How thankful we are for this word as we live in the last days! Truly, thank You. ✉

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CHAPTER

7

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Matthew Chapter 7

< Matthew 7:1-29 >

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. ‘Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. ‘Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. ‘Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. ‘Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but

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inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' 'Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 'But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.' And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 7 is the chapter that concludes the Sermon on the Mount, teaching the attitude with which the people of

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the kingdom of heaven treat others, the posture of praying to God, the discernment to choose the way that leads to life, and the obedience that hears the word and does it. Jesus first tells us to examine our own great faults before condemning others, and He also requires the discernment not to handle what is holy carelessly. He then tells us to believe God as the Father who gives good things and to ask, seek, and knock, and He sums up His teaching on human relationships with the principle of treating others as we want to be treated.

In the latter half, the parables of the two gates and two ways, the two kinds of trees and their fruits, the two classes of believers, and the two builders appear one after another. There is the narrow gate that leads to life and the wide gate that leads to destruction, and there is the good tree that bears good fruit and the bad tree that bears bad fruit. No one can enter the kingdom of heaven merely by calling out *"Lord, Lord"* with his lips and claiming to have performed works of power; he must do the will of God. The person who hears the words of Jesus and does them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock, but the person who hears and does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The crowds who heard the teaching of Jesus were astonished to see that, unlike the scribes, He taught with authority.

1. The teaching to first examine your own plank (verses 1–5)

"Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1) does not mean that all judgment and discernment are forbidden. In the same chapter, Jesus told us to discern false prophets and examine their fruits. What He forbids here, therefore, is the attitude of sitting in God's seat and rashly judging another person's motives, character, and final destiny, or of condemning others while hiding one's own faults.

A person comes to be evaluated again by the standard he himself uses. The double attitude that is strict with the wrongs of others while generous with one's own cannot stand before the justice of God. Jesus explained this with the contrast between the small speck in a brother's eye and the large plank in one's own eye.

If a person sees well the small faults of others but does not realize the greater pride, hypocrisy, and sin within himself, he cannot help his brother rightly. Only when he first removes his own plank can he also see clearly and remove the speck in his brother's eye. These words are not a command to leave a brother's wrong unattended but a teaching to examine oneself first and help others with humility and love.

As the words *"and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5)* show, right help has an order. We must first look back on ourselves and be set right, and then help the other person with a heart that seeks to restore him, not with the aim of lowering or condemning him.

2. Handling what is holy and pearls with discernment (verse 6)

Jesus said, *"Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine" (Matthew 7:6)*. This does not mean that we may rashly call people dogs or swine, or that we should preach the gospel only to certain people. It is a warning not to handle without discernment the holy and precious things that belong to God.

There can be people who do not acknowledge the value of the pearl at all, who trample on it, and who rather attack the person who delivers it. Therefore, while we must not rashly condemn others, it is not a wise attitude either to accept every reaction and every teaching unconditionally in the same way.

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In verses 1–5 Jesus warned against condemning judgment, and in verse 6 He required the spiritual discernment that is truly necessary. Love does not do away with discernment, and discernment is different from hating or despising the other person. We must treasure what is holy while wisely examining people's attitudes and situations.

3. The prayer that asks, seeks, and knocks (verses 7–11)

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7)—these words are an exhortation to pray persistently, trusting God. To ask is to tell God one's needs; to seek is to actively pursue God's will and answer; and to knock is the attitude of going forward in faith until the door is opened.

Jesus taught assurance in prayer by pointing to the relationship between a father and his son. No father gives his son a stone when he asks for bread, or a serpent when he asks for a fish. If even human parents know how to give good things to their children, the Father in heaven gives even better things to those who ask Him.

These words are not a promise that God unconditionally gives everything a person asks for out of greed. God knows whether what His child has asked for is actually beneficial or harmful, and He gives good things with the Father's wisdom and love. Therefore, the person who prays must ask believing in God's goodness rather than forcing his own will on God.

4. Treating others as you want to be treated (verse 12)

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

These words are commonly called the Golden Rule. They mean that we should first do to others the good deeds we want

others to do to us. It is an active command to go beyond the passive attitude of merely not harming others and to practice love, respect, and consideration first.

People want to be respected, understood, forgiven, and helped. If so, we must acknowledge that others are beings with the same needs and treat them that way first. Jesus said that this sums up the teaching of the Law and the Prophets. Faith that loves God must be revealed in the attitude with which we actually treat our neighbors.

5. The narrow gate that leads to life (verses 13–14)

Jesus said that not all ways arrive at the same destination. The gate that leads to destruction is wide and its way is broad, so many enter by it; but the gate that leads to life is narrow and its way is difficult, so few find it.

The broad way can look safe for the reason that many people go on it. The way of following one's own desires and thoughts as they are and living without responsibility can also feel comfortable. But the fact that many people choose a way does not guarantee its truth or its final outcome.

The narrow gate does not simply mean that we must go through many hardships or practice asceticism. The way of receiving the words of Jesus as the truth and following God's will rather than one's own makes us lay down human pride and desire, so it can feel narrow and difficult. Jesus told us to choose a way not by its width or by the number of people on it but by the final destination to which it leads.

6. Discerning false prophets by their fruits (verses 15–20)

False prophets outwardly wear sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are like ravenous wolves. It can be hard to distinguish true prophets from false ones by appearance and

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religious words alone. That is why Jesus said, *"You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16).*

Fruit is the result that a person's teaching, life, and ministry continually produce. We must examine whether he preaches the word of God rightly, whether he seeks God's will over his own gain, and whether his teaching leads its hearers to the truth and to a righteous life. Eloquence of speech, outward power, and the number of people do not guarantee genuineness.

Just as grapes cannot be gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles, the nature of a tree is revealed in the end by its fruit. A good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree bears bad fruit. The words that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire show that God's judgment falls on false teaching and false living.

7. The words *"Lord, Lord"* and works of power alone are not enough (verses 21–23)

Jesus said that not everyone who calls out to Him, *"Lord, Lord,"* enters the kingdom of heaven. Confessing faith with the lips and actually following the will of God can be two different things.

On the last day many will say that they prophesied in the name of the Lord, cast out demons, and did many wonders. But Jesus will say to them, *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23).*

This shows that religious office, amazing power, and outward achievement cannot replace a true relationship with God. What matters is not the fact that a person used the name of the Lord but whether he actually obeyed the will of God. Even if he did many works recognized by people, if he lived following his own desires and lawlessness, those deeds cannot be the ground of salvation at the final judgment.

8. The house on the rock and the house on the sand (verses 24–27)

Jesus compared the person who hears His words and does them to a wise man who built his house on the rock. Though the rain descends, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat on that house, it does not fall, because its foundation is laid on the rock.

On the other hand, the person who hears the word and does not do it is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. In calm days the house on the rock and the house on the sand can look alike. But when the rain, the floods, and the winds strike, the foundations of the two houses are revealed. The house on the sand falls, and great is its fall.

The two men are the same in that both heard the word. The difference lies in whether they did the word they heard. Knowing much of the word and being moved by it is not enough. We must lay the foundation of our life on the words of Jesus and actually obey them. Trials, temptations, and the final judgment reveal what each person has lived on as his foundation.

9. Jesus, who taught with authority (verses 28–29)

When Jesus finished the words of the Sermon on the Mount, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, for His teaching was not like that of the scribes but like that of one having authority.

The scribes taught mainly by citing the interpretations and traditions of earlier teachers, but Jesus revealed the authority of directly proclaiming the will of God. He did not deal only with people's outward appearance but exposed the motives of the heart and hidden sins, and He clearly divided life from destruction, true faith from false faith, and wise obedience

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from foolish disobedience.

The Sermon on the Mount does not end with hearing good lessons and admiring them. It requires everyone who has heard the word to choose which gate he will enter, what fruit he will bear, and on what foundation he will build his life.

The core meaning of Matthew chapter 7

First, before condemning others, we must first examine the greater faults and hypocrisy within ourselves.

Second, we must abandon condemning judgment, but we need the discernment that distinguishes what is holy and what is false teaching.

Third, since God is the Father who gives good things to those who ask, we must ask, seek, and knock in faith.

Fourth, treating others first as we want to be treated is the way to practice the teaching of the Law and the Prophets.

Fifth, we must choose not the broad way that many people choose but the narrow gate that leads to life.

Sixth, false prophets must be discerned not by religious appearance or eloquent words but by the fruits revealed in their teaching and life.

Seventh, true obedience that follows the will of God matters more than calling on the Lord with words or performing amazing works of power.

Eighth, only the person who hears the words of Jesus and does them stands unshaken before trials and judgment, like the man who built his house on the rock.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 7 is the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, teaching us to examine ourselves first and treat others with love, to discern false ways and false teachings, to pray trusting God the Father, and, by hearing and doing the words of Jesus, to choose the

narrow way of life and the life built on the rock.

2) Matthew chapter 7 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Matthew chapter 7, the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, is the chapter that makes clear who enters the narrow gate of life and who is acknowledged by the Lord on the last day. Jesus told us to remove the plank from our own eye before condemning others, to handle the holy gospel with discernment, and to ask, seek, and knock before God the Father. He then contrasted the narrow gate with the wide gate, the good tree with the bad tree, true believers with those who practice lawlessness, and the house on the rock with the house on the sand.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, at the center of all these contrasts stand the righteousness of God and the righteousness of man. The person who believes in the righteousness of God, which Jesus fulfilled by taking upon Himself the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John, paying the wages of those sins on the Cross, and rising again, is the person who has entered the narrow gate of life. On the other hand, the person who relies on his own good deeds, religious zeal, and powers may seem to serve the Lord outwardly, but he can still remain on the broad way and in the house on the sand.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1

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John 5:6–8)—as these words say, the water, the blood, and the Spirit testify of the one salvation God has fulfilled. Matthew chapter 7 shows the fact that the difference between the person who has believed this gospel and the person who has only a religious exterior is bound to be revealed at the end.

1. The words to first remove the plank from your own eye (verses 1–5)

"Judge not, that you be not judged" (Matthew 7:1) does not mean that all discernment is forbidden. In the same chapter, Jesus told us to discern false prophets and examine their fruits. The judgment He forbids here is the hypocritical judgment that condemns others by the standard of one's own righteousness while failing to see one's own sins and faults.

The sight of seeing well the speck in a brother's eye while not realizing the plank in one's own eye shows the figure of a religious person who teaches and condemns others without having solved his own problem of sin. The person who judges others by the standard of the Law is himself bound to be a sinner before that Law. Even if a person tries to remove the plank of sin by his own good deeds or prayers of repentance, the fundamental problem of sin is not solved.

The way the plank of sin is removed is to believe the gospel that Jesus took upon Himself all the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The person who believes in this salvation knows that his sins have been washed away completely, and because he too has been saved by grace, he does not rashly condemn the faults of others.

"Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5)—in these words there is a clear

order. Only when we ourselves have first received the remission of sins can we teach others the way to the remission of sins. The person who has not solved his own sins may say he is removing his brother's speck, but he can rather add only his self-righteousness and the condemnation of the Law. In contrast, the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel does not condemn his brother but builds him up within the gospel with love and mercy.

2. Handling what is holy and pearls with discernment (verse 6)

"Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine" (Matthew 7:6)—these words show how holy and precious a treasure the gospel of the water and the Spirit is. The remission of sins that Jesus fulfilled through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection is not a religious doctrine made by man but the perfect salvation fulfilled by God.

But not everyone acknowledges the value of this pearl. Some people may not know the gospel well at first, so we must teach them with patience. But there are also people who, having heard the truth sufficiently, deliberately trample on it, distort the gospel for their own desires and gain, and rather attack those who preach it.

These words do not mean that we should not preach the gospel to sinners. They mean that we should preach the gospel to everyone, but discern those who take the gospel lightly or use it as a tool of gain, and handle the holy gospel in a holy way. Preaching the gospel requires love for every soul together with the discernment that guards the truth.

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3. The gospel prayer that asks, seeks, and knocks (verses 7–11)

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

A sinner cannot make for himself the righteousness that entitles him to call God his Father. But when he believes that Jesus blotted out all his sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the blood of the Cross, he receives the remission of sins and becomes a child of God. The words to ask, seek, and knock are the privilege of prayer given to those who have become God's children in this way.

The saved must pray persistently not only for what their own lives need but also for the wisdom and strength to serve the gospel, for the door of the gospel to be opened, for lost souls to be saved, and for the church of God to be protected. Even when God seems not to answer immediately, we must believe His goodness and keep asking and seeking.

If even evil human parents know how to give good things to their children, the heavenly Father gives far better things. This promise does not mean that we can obtain whatever wealth and success the flesh wants. God knows what is truly good, and He answers with what is most fitting for the soul of His child and for the work of the gospel.

4. The life that shows the grace received to others (verse 12)

"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

These words do not mean that a person is saved as the reward for living a good life. However well a person treats others, he cannot wash away the sins of his heart with those deeds. Salvation is received only by believing the gospel God has fulfilled.

But the person who has received the remission of sins without any merit must show to others the love and mercy he has received. If he wants to be forgiven by others yet does not forgive their faults, and wants to be helped yet turns away from those in hardship, his life cannot be called worthy of the grace he received through the gospel.

The life of treating others well is not a condition of salvation but a fruit that appears in the saved. The person who remembers the love he received from God lives a life of understanding first, serving first, and preaching the gospel first.

5. The narrow gate that leads to life (verses 13–14)

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13–14).

The narrow gate does not mean simply enduring much suffering or keeping a strict religious life. Believing only in the salvation that Jesus completed by taking upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, dying on the Cross shedding His blood, and rising again is the narrow gate that leads to life.

The reason this gate is narrow is that no one can enter it carrying human righteousness and merit together with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The person who holds on to his own good deeds, repentance, and devotion as conditions of salvation thinks that he must add something of his own. But to enter the narrow gate, we must lay down our own righteousness and believe only in the righteousness God has completed.

The broad way is easily accepted by many people because,

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while professing to believe in Jesus, it acknowledges human merit and tells people that it is normal to keep living as sinners even with sin remaining in their hearts. But a way does not become the truth because many follow it. What matters is not the number of people or the size of a religion but whether the way leads to life or to destruction.

6. Discerning false prophets by their fruits (verses 15–20)

False prophets outwardly wear sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are like ravenous wolves. They may quote the Scriptures, call on the name of Jesus, and look godly. But in reality they can pursue their own honor, riches, and power rather than people's souls.

Jesus told us to discern false prophets not by their appearance or eloquence but by their fruits. The most important fruit is whether, through the teaching they deliver, people truly receive the remission of sins and come to believe in the righteousness of God. If someone speaks only of the blood of the Cross while leaving out the fact that Jesus took on sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, or teaches that sins are washed away only by daily prayers of repentance, or holds up good deeds and offerings like conditions of salvation, he cannot lead people to the perfect remission of sins.

A good tree bears good fruit. The person who preaches the true gospel leads sinners to the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that all the sins of their hearts are washed away, and helps the saved live for the kingdom and righteousness of God. But a bad tree bears bad fruit that leaves sin as it is in people's hearts and binds them to self-righteousness and religious acts.

The outward size of a church, miracles, and powers are not the final standard for judging true fruit. We must examine by

the word what gospel is being preached and whether that gospel leads people to the remission of sins and the righteousness of God.

7. Not everyone who says *"Lord, Lord"* enters the kingdom of heaven (verses 21–23)

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

On the last day many will claim that they prophesied in the name of the Lord, cast out demons, and did many wonders. But Jesus says to them, *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23).*

This shows that sermons, miracles, and religious activities cannot be the evidence of salvation. However great the powers a person has performed, if sin remains in his heart and he has not believed in the righteousness of God, he cannot be acknowledged by the Lord. Not believing in the salvation God has fulfilled and establishing one's own merit instead is lawlessness, and altering the gospel of the truth and preaching it is also lawlessness.

"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40)—as these words say, the Father's will is that we believe in the salvation fulfilled by Jesus Christ and obtain everlasting life. Believing the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all sins through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again is the heart of the faith that believes in the Son.

To do the will of the Father does not mean piling up good deeds to enter the kingdom of heaven by oneself. It is first to believe the salvation God fulfilled through the Son just as it is,

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to receive the remission of sins by that faith, and then to live following the will of God. True obedience begins with believing the completed gospel.

8. The house built on the rock and the house built on the sand (verses 24–27)

The person who hears the words of Jesus and does them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Though the rain descends, the floods come, and the winds blow, that house does not fall, because its foundation is on the rock. But the person who hears the word and does not do it is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand, and when trials and judgment come, he falls greatly.

The rock refers to the unchanging word of God and the salvation Jesus Christ has completed. The person who believes the word that Jesus removed all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, and who has built his faith on it, does not lose the assurance of salvation even when his feelings and deeds waver.

On the other hand, making one's own good deeds, prayers of repentance, and religious experiences the foundation is like building a house on the sand. When such a person has lived virtuously, he feels saved; but when he commits a wrong, he thinks he has become a sinner again. Since his foundation is his own deeds, his faith cannot help but keep shaking.

To hear the word and do it does not simply mean practicing many moral commands. It is to believe the way of salvation God has spoken just as it is, without altering it with one's own thoughts, and to live according to that faith. Before the rain, the floods, and the winds of the final judgment, the house built on human merit falls, and only the house built on the gospel God has completed remains.

9. Jesus, who taught with authority (verses 28–29)

When Jesus finished speaking, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, for His teaching was not like that of the scribes but like that of one having authority. Jesus did not speak by borrowing the authority of others; He Himself distinguished and proclaimed life and destruction, truth and falsehood, those who will enter the kingdom of heaven and those who will be turned away.

Jesus could speak with such authority because He Himself is the gate of salvation and the Rock. He did not come as one who only demands that sinners pile up more deeds; He came as the Savior who would Himself take on the sins of mankind, be judged, and complete salvation. Therefore, the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount is not a demand to complete the word with our own righteousness but a calling to believe in the righteousness of God that Jesus fulfilled and to build our lives on His word.

The core meaning of Matthew chapter 7

First, before condemning others, we must first receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have the plank of sin removed.

Second, the person who has received the remission of sins does not condemn his brother's faults with his own righteousness but builds him up within the gospel with love and mercy.

Third, since the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the most precious pearl, we must preach it to everyone, but discern those who deliberately distort and trample on it.

Fourth, the person who has received the remission of sins and become a child of God must believe God as the Father who gives good things and must ask, seek, and knock for the work

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of the gospel.

Fifth, the narrow gate of life is the way of abandoning human righteousness and merit and believing only in the righteousness of God completed by Jesus Christ.

Sixth, false prophets must be discerned not by outward powers or the size of a church but by the gospel they preach and the fruit that gospel bears in souls.

Seventh, no one can enter the kingdom of heaven by the confession *"Lord, Lord"* and religious powers alone; we must believe, according to the Father's will, in the salvation the Son has fulfilled.

Eighth, faith that relies on one's own deeds and religious experiences is like a house on the sand, but faith built on the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not fall before trials and judgment, like a house on the rock.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 7 is the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, teaching us first to have the plank of sin removed by believing in the righteousness of God that Jesus fulfilled through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, to discern the true gospel from false teachings, and, relying not on human righteousness but only on the righteousness of Christ, to enter the narrow gate of life and build our faith on the rock. ✉

Matthew Chapter 7

Jesus told us to enter the gate of life and stand on the word

Introduction

Matthew chapter 7 deals with our attitude toward others, prayer, the gate that leads to life, and the discernment of false prophets and the rock of the word. When Jesus told us not to judge, He did not mean that we should never discern any wrong. He meant that before condemning a brother with our own righteousness, we should first see the plank in our own eye, remember that we too are people who have received the remission of sins by the grace of God, and help our brother's restoration with love.

The words not to give what is holy and the pearls carelessly do not mean hating people or monopolizing the gospel. Believers must preach the gospel, but instead of continuing to approach without discernment those who despise the truth and seek to attack it, they must wisely discern to whom and when to preach. At the same time, the children of God must believe in the Father's goodness and ask, seek, and knock, and must first treat others as they themselves want to be treated.

Jesus told us not to follow the wide gate that leads to destruction but to enter the narrow gate that leads to life. The narrow gate is not the gate of a difficult religion passed through by human asceticism or good deeds. It is the gate of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all the people of the world through the

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baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation with His resurrection. Because this gospel has no room for human merit and self-righteousness, it looks narrow to the thoughts of the flesh, but it is the only gate of salvation that leads sinners to life.

False prophets appear wearing sheep's clothing, so they cannot be discerned by appearance, eloquence, office, and fame alone. We must examine by their fruits what gospel they preach and whether their teaching actually leads its hearers to the remission of all sins. Even the fact that someone prophesied in the name of the Lord, cast out demons, and did many wonders does not guarantee salvation. The Father's will is to believe in the salvation He fulfilled through His only begotten Son, and abandoning this will and setting up human deeds as conditions of salvation is lawlessness.

The person who hears the words of Jesus and does them is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. To do here does not mean making oneself righteous by human effort; it means believing with the heart the gospel the Lord has fulfilled and receiving His word as the standard of one's life. Matthew chapter 7 teaches us not to stay in admiration or religious ability but to discern the true gospel and enter the gate of life, and to live praying, loving, and keeping the truth on the rock of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus told us to first remove our own plank and rightly discern the gospel and people

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it

will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. 'Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces" (Matthew 7:1–6).

"Judge not"—these words do not mean that we should make no distinction at all between good and evil and approve every action as right. Verse 6, which immediately follows, tells us to discern those who do not treasure what is holy and the pearls, and the latter part of Matthew chapter 7 tells us to discern false prophets by their fruits. What Jesus forbade is the self-righteous judgment that sits in God's seat and pronounces even on another person's motives and final destiny, condemning him.

People are easily generous with themselves and strict with others. They excuse their own wrongs by citing their situations and circumstances, while magnifying a brother's small mistake into a problem of his whole character and faith. They may judge on hearing unconfirmed words, or hold on to one failure and conclude that the person will never change. Such judgment comes from the heart that wants to make itself look more righteous rather than to set the brother upright.

"And with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you"—these words are a warning that the harsh standard one has used will also be applied to oneself. If we do not tolerate the faults of others in the least, we too cannot stand before the same standard. If God judged all our thoughts, words, and hidden motives with the same strictness, no one could call

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himself righteous.

Jesus compared a brother's small fault to a speck and the great problem in one's own eye to a plank. The person with a plank has his sight blocked, so he can neither see his brother's condition accurately nor safely remove the speck. Trying to correct others while not seeing one's own sin and unbelief, greed and pride, is hypocrisy.

In particular, if a person counts riches, honor, and the desires of the flesh more precious than God while judging the small deeds of others, he must first throw away the idols of his own heart. A person can profess with his lips to believe in God while actually making worldly success and self-interest the master of his life. This fundamental unbelief and self-centeredness become the plank in the eye, keeping him from seeing the word of God and his brother rightly.

"First remove the plank from your own eye"—these words do not mean that we can help others only after making ourselves perfect. Man cannot remove all the sins of his heart by self-cultivation. We must first admit that we are unrighteous sinners before God, abandon our self-righteousness and idols, and believe in the salvation God has prepared to have our problem of sin solved.

Jesus came to save all sinners, including those who condemn others while not seeing their own sins. Jesus took on all the sins of mankind—pride and hypocrisy, idolatry and merciless judgment—through the baptism He received from John. The sinless Son of God accepted the responsibility of sinners onto His own body and became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

After taking upon Himself the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in our

place. He shed His blood and died, was buried, and rose again on the third day, overcoming sin and death. He thereby washed away completely the sins that human self-reflection and good deeds can never remove, and fulfilled salvation.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching that one becomes righteous by living more uprightly than others. It is the gospel of believing the fact that Jesus took on all the sins of believers through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of sins and becomes righteous before God not by the superiority of his own deeds but by the righteousness fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

On the person who has been born again by believing that Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit comes. Because he knows that he too received the remission of sins without any merit, he seeks restoration rather than condemnation when dealing with a brother's faults. He does not insist that only his own thoughts are right, but first examines himself before the word and then helps the other person, asking for the wisdom of the Spirit.

After removing the plank, we must not look away from our brother's speck but must *"see clearly"* and remove it. Love is not unconditionally covering up wrongs. If a brother is being ruined by sin and falsehood, we must exhort him with the word and speak of the responsibility he must take. Yet we must not shame him publicly or display superiority; remembering that we too are weak, we must gently help his restoration.

It is also not the same as condemning judgment when the church judges clear false teaching and harmful behavior and establishes order. The church can confirm the facts, discern by the standard of the word, and take measures to protect the community and the weak. But it must not bury a person out of

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personal feelings and rumors, or shut off even the possibility of repentance and restoration.

The *"what is holy"* and the *"pearls"* of verse 6 point above all to the holy and precious truth of the gospel God has given. If we keep throwing it without any discernment to those who refuse to listen to this truth, mock it, and trample on it for their own desires, the gospel is insulted and even the one who delivers it can be harmed. Jesus told us to manage the gospel preciously and discern wisely to whom and when to preach it.

Yet we must not hastily brand anyone a dog or a pig and use that as an excuse not to preach the gospel. Everyone is at first a sinner who does not know the gospel, and God wants everyone to be saved. We must first preach the gospel clearly and give people the opportunity to hear. But if someone, having heard the truth sufficiently, deliberately mocks it and repeatedly attacks the gospel and the evangelist, we may withdraw from endless dispute and preach the gospel to other prepared souls.

To treasure the gospel also means that the one who preaches it does not use it as a tool to fulfill his own desires. If someone uses the gospel to gain money, honor, and influence, or distorts the truth to make the other person his own follower, he himself becomes one who tramples the pearls. The born-again righteous, as stewards entrusted with the gospel, must deliver it accurately, love the souls of those who hear, and leave the outcome to God.

When the desire to judge others arises, believers must first examine whether they know the facts accurately, whether they apply the same standard to themselves, and whether they desire the person's restoration. If it is a matter that must be spoken of directly, they should speak to the person in love, and they must not spread as rumors things that have nothing to do with them.

They must admit that their own judgment can be wrong and ask for the guidance of the word and the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 7:1–6 is not a passage that forbids all judgment while at the same time teaching us to discern nothing. The righteous person who believes the fact that all his great sins have been washed away by the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not condemn his brother with his own righteousness. He first has his own plank solved by the gospel, helps remove his brother's speck with humility and love, and discerns to whom and when to preach so that the holy gospel is not despised. True discernment lies not in exalting oneself and discarding others but in protecting and restoring the gospel and souls.

Jesus told God's children to ask in faith and show the grace they have received to their neighbors

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:7–12).

The words "Ask, seek, knock" are a promise that when God's children meet difficulties and needs, they should not lose heart and give up but should ask the Father for help. To ask is to tell God what we need; to seek is to actively look for God's

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will and the way of solution; and to knock is the attitude of continuing to go forward in faith even in situations that look closed.

Prayer is not asking with the lips and then waiting without doing anything. If we have asked for the way of preaching the gospel, we must look for the people and the means and actually preach it. If we have asked for opportunities to work and for wisdom, we must learn, prepare, and do the work entrusted to us. The person who believes God will answer also performs the actions of faith he must take, as if preparing the vessel to hold the answer.

Yet this does not mean that if we only demand persistently, we obtain all human desires as they are. Verse 11 says that the Father gives *"good things."* Just as a young child can mistake something dangerous for something good, people can think their own greed a blessing. God does not give His children a harmful stone or serpent, and He judges with the Father's wisdom what is better than what was asked, and gives it.

Therefore, we must not conclude that God has not heard just because the answer to prayer does not come at the time and in the shape we have set. God may give immediately, may make us wait, and may withhold what was wrongly asked and open a better way instead. The prayer of faith is not forcing one's own will on God but asking clearly while entrusting the time and method of the answer to the Father.

Jesus said that even evil human parents do not give a stone when their child asks for bread, or a serpent when he asks for a fish. How much more will God, who is good and perfect, surely give the best things to His own children! The assurance of prayer comes not from the splendid words and merits of the one who prays but from the Father's good character and His love for His children.

What matters is who can call God *"your Father who is in heaven."* All people are God's creatures, but the person in whom sin remains cannot enjoy the unhindered fellowship of a child with the holy God. We must first believe in the salvation God fulfilled for sinners, receive the remission of sins, and become children of God.

Jesus came to save all sinners who had left God and lived seeking only their own desires. Jesus took on all the sins of mankind—greed and unbelief, wrong prayers and selfishness—through the baptism He received from John. The sinless Son of God accepted the responsibility of sinners onto His own body and became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

After taking upon Himself the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in our place. He shed His blood and died, was buried, and rose again on the third day, overcoming sin and death. He thereby fulfilled the perfect remission of sins and the everlasting life that sinners can never obtain by their own prayers and good deeds.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching that we obtain the remission of sins by praying much. It is the gospel of believing the fact that Jesus took on all the sins of believers through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of sins not by his own merit but by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and becomes a child who can call God Father.

On the person who has been born again by believing that Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit comes. The Spirit makes him realize what he should ask for and delivers him from prayers

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offered only for his own greed. He comes to ask for God's name and kingdom, for the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls, for the church and its workers, for the faith to overcome temptation, and for what his life needs.

The person who is seeking the gospel of the water and the Spirit itself must also ask, seek, and knock. He must admit his sins and search the word to find what the true remission of sins God has given is, and hold on to the testimony of the Scriptures rather than human tradition or his own thoughts. To the person who sincerely seeks the truth, God lets him hear the word and opens the way for him to realize and believe the gospel.

Verse 12 teaches those who ask God for good things to show the grace they have received to others as well. If we want to be comforted, we should first comfort the wounded; if we want to be helped, we should help those in need; and if we want to be respected, we should respect others. It is active love that does not wait until the other person treats us well first but first practices the treatment we want to receive.

"*For this is the Law and the Prophets*"—these words show that God's teaching to love our neighbors forms the heart of the Law and the Prophets. But no one can be saved by keeping the Golden Rule perfectly. People want to be treated well yet hate to treat others first, and they count their own needs great while easily turning away from the needs of others.

Therefore, verse 12 must not be turned into a condition of salvation. Believers are saved because Jesus first loved unqualified sinners and gave even His own life. The righteous who have received that grace do good not to obtain salvation by treating others well but to reveal to their neighbors the love of God they have already received.

Treating others well also does not mean unconditionally granting every demand of the other person. Just as we truly

want to receive beneficial help and honest words, we must give the other person what is actually beneficial. Refusing a wrong demand and recommending the right way can also be love. The standard of treating others is not a person's momentary desire but the word of God and true benefit.

Believers, while asking for what they need, must give thanks for what God has already given and use it faithfully. After receiving talents, possessions, and opportunities, we must not store them up only for ourselves but must use them for the gospel and for our neighbors. If we ask God for greater work, we must be faithful in the small work now entrusted to us; and if we ask for an open door, we must be ready to obey and enter when the door opens.

We must not lose heart while waiting for the answer either. In the process of seeking, the way may be blocked, and the door may not open soon though we knock; but we must believe the fact that God does not give His children what is harmful and prepares the best things. The time of waiting is not a time to abandon faith but a time to hold on to the word, ask for wisdom, and continue preparing.

Matthew chapter 7 verses 7–12 show the way the person who has become God's child through the gospel of the water and the Spirit lives, believing in the Father's goodness and asking. The born-again righteous ask for God's will, seek the way they need, and knock on the door in faith. They do not force the answer according to their own desires but trust the Father who gives good things. Remembering the salvation and love they received without any merit, they also first treat others as they want to be treated, and by prayer and obedience they carry on the work of the kingdom of God and the gospel.

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Jesus told us to enter the narrow gate of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and walk the way of life

"'Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13–14).

Jesus said that two gates and two ways lie before man. One is wide and broad but leads to destruction; the other is narrow and difficult but leads to life. The two ways differ both in destination and in the way of entering. Which way one chooses is not a simple difference of lifestyle but a matter that divides everlasting life from destruction.

The narrow gate does not mean that we are saved by deliberately living a hard and painful life. The fact that someone has lived poor, endured many hardships, and kept a strict religious life cannot lead him to life. Entering the narrow gate is believing exactly the truth of salvation God has established, not human sacrifice and toil.

This gate is narrow because the way God saves sinners is only one. No one can carry in with him, as conditions of salvation, human good deeds and merits, denominations and offices, repeated prayers of repentance, or religious zeal. Nor may we widen the way with our own thoughts or believe the gospel with a part left out. We must believe the salvation God fulfilled through Jesus Christ just as it is.

The wide gate says that we may believe in whatever way we want. A person may consider himself saved because he attends church, acknowledges the Cross, and tries to live a good life, while treating as unimportant the fact that Jesus took over the sin of the world through His baptism. The way of

believing that one must receive the remission of sins over and over for the sins committed daily, continuing a religious life with sin left as it is in the heart, is also the broad way.

A way does not become the truth because many people go on it. The broad way easily gains the support of familiar tradition and the approval of the majority, and it does not require laying down one's self-righteousness and desires, so many people enter it. On the other hand, it is hard to admit, by the standard of the word of the Scriptures alone, that one's faith has been wrong, and to believe again. That is why few find and enter the gate of life.

Yet the mere fact that only a few believe something is not evidence of the truth either. Strange and extreme teachings can also have few followers. The standard for judging whether the gate is narrow lies not in popularity or numbers but in whether the salvation of Jesus Christ testified by the Scriptures is delivered accurately. We must examine the word of God rather than human tradition, and believe the gospel by which sins are actually blotted out according to that word.

Everyone is born in sin and walks the broad way of destruction. No one can change direction by his own good deeds and religious efforts and pass through the gate of life. That is why Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth as the only Savior for sinners.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took on all the sins mankind has committed from Adam until the last day of the world. He accepted onto His own body all the sin of the world, including self-righteousness and false faith, idolatry and unbelief. The sinless Jesus became the Lamb of God who would be judged in the place of sinners.

After taking upon Himself the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist,

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Jesus carried those sins to the Cross. By shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He bore in our place death, the wages of sin, and He was buried and rose again on the third day, overcoming sin and death. He thereby completely fulfilled the way of salvation that leads sinners to life.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a teaching that one must endure a hard religious life to be saved. It is the gospel of believing with the heart the fact that Jesus took on all the sins of believers through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection. When we believe this truth, all the sins that were in the sinner's heart are washed away, and we become righteous without sin before God.

If a person does not believe that Jesus took over all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and believes only in the blood of the Cross separately, he cannot fully know why Jesus was judged in the place of sinners. It was because He had taken over sins through His baptism that He carried those sins and died shedding His blood on the Cross. Believing together this testimony of the water, the blood, and the Spirit is the faith that enters the gate of life God has established.

The narrow gate and the difficult way must be understood as distinct yet connected. Entering the narrow gate is receiving the remission of sins once and for all and being born again by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Walking the difficult way is, after being saved, laying down one's own thoughts and the desires of the world according to the guidance of the Spirit and living for the gospel and the kingdom of God.

The way of life is difficult not because the gospel is imperfect or the power of salvation weak. It is because the desires of the flesh remain even in the born-again, and the

world rejects faith that departs from the religions and values the majority follow. Preaching the gospel accurately can bring misunderstanding and blame, and putting the salvation of other souls before one's own comfort requires sacrifice and endurance.

But the strength to walk this way does not come from human will either. On the person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit comes. The Spirit makes him understand the word and discern wrong ways, and even in hardship the Spirit keeps holding him so that he does not abandon the gospel but continues walking the way of life in union with the church.

Walking the difficult way does not mean cutting ourselves off from the world and seeking only hardship. Believers must live faithfully carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to them in their homes and workplaces. Only, we must not compromise the truth or abandon the work of the gospel to gain comfort and human approval. At every moment of choice we must first consider which way pleases God and saves souls.

Even the person who has already entered the narrow gate can envy the broad way. Seeing many people living recognized and comfortable lives, he may feel as if the toil of following the gospel were vain. At such times we must look not at the present appearance of the way but at its destination. The end of the broad way is destruction, but at the end of the way of life are the kingdom of God and everlasting glory.

The person in whose heart sin still remains must not rely on which church he belongs to or how long he has believed. He must examine his faith before the Scriptures and know clearly by what method Jesus removed all his sins. Even if admitting that one has believed wrongly is shameful and hard, he must

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hear the gospel of life and believe it with the heart.

The saved righteous must preach the gospel accurately so that others also come in through the narrow gate. We must not blur the truth of salvation or change it into pleasant words in order to gather many people. Even if we preach to only one person, we must clearly deliver the fact that Jesus Christ removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, so that the person actually receives the remission of sins.

Matthew chapter 7 verses 13–14 warn us not to follow unconditionally the way the majority walk but to find the gate of life God has established. The narrow gate is the gate of believing not in human asceticism or good deeds but in the gospel of the water and the Spirit fulfilled by Jesus Christ. The righteous who have entered that gate and received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit count the truth more precious than human popularity and the comfort of the world, and, led by the Spirit, walk the difficult way of life to the end for the gospel and the kingdom of God.

Jesus told us to discern the fruits of the true gospel and build our house on the rock of His word

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them" (Matthew 7:15–20).

After speaking of the narrow gate and the wide gate, Jesus immediately warned us to beware of false prophets. For the person seeking the narrow way that leads to life, whose teaching he follows is a grave matter that divides everlasting life from destruction. False prophets do not appear in a dangerous form from the start. Outwardly they wear sheep's clothing and look gentle, godly, and loving, but inwardly they carry the heart of a wolf that robs souls of the truth of life.

Therefore, we must not judge a true servant of God only by appearance and eloquence, office and fame, or the size of a church. Jesus said twice, *"You will know them by their fruits."* The fruit here does not mean only a mild character or many good deeds. We must see what gospel the person believes and preaches, whether his teaching actually brings its hearers to the remission of all sins, and whether he lives not for his own gain but for the salvation of souls and the benefit of the gospel.

Just as grapes cannot be gathered from thornbushes and figs cannot be picked from thistles, a person without the true gospel in his heart cannot bear the good fruit of the gospel. If someone emphasizes only the blood of the Cross while leaving out the fact that Jesus took over the sin of the world through His baptism, or adds human acts of repentance and good deeds as conditions for the remission of sins, it cannot lead the sinner's heart to the complete remission of sins. However often someone speaks the name of Jesus, a teaching that leaves sin as it is in the heart is not the true gospel that bears the fruit of life.

Becoming a good tree does not begin with first adorning one's own deeds to look good. When a sinner believes with his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took on all the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again on the third day—he receives the

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remission of all his sins and becomes righteous. The person who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift, even though weaknesses remain in his flesh, gradually bears the good fruit of loving the gospel and serving so that other souls also obtain this salvation.

On the contrary, a bad tree does not become a good tree by decorating its exterior religiously. If a person does not believe the truth that Jesus took over all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, sin remains as it is at the root of his faith. In that state, even if he speaks like a prophet and builds up many religious achievements, he cannot bear the fruit of the remission of sins. The words that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire clearly warn that God's judgment falls on the false gospel and on those who hold on to it

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21–23).

The mere fact that a person calls Jesus *"Lord"* with his lips is not evidence that he will enter the kingdom of heaven. The claim to have preached in the name of the Lord, cast out demons, and performed amazing wonders cannot be evidence of salvation either. People marvel at visible miracles and great

achievements, but the Lord looks at whether the faith of the true remission of sins is in a person's heart. Salvation depends not on how much religious power one has displayed but on whether one has believed, according to His will, in the salvation God has fulfilled.

The will of the heavenly Father is to send His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to save sinners from all their sins, and to make those who believe in that salvation His children and heirs of the everlasting kingdom. Jesus completely fulfilled this will by taking on the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rising again. Therefore, to do the Father's will is not to make up salvation in one's own way first, but to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has given just as it is, to receive the remission of sins, and to live by that faith.

When the Lord said, *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"* it was not because their activities were insufficient. They put forward many works, but they did not receive into their hearts the true salvation Jesus fulfilled. If a person has held on only to the blood of the Cross and his own merits, leaving out the fact that Jesus took over the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, sin still remains in his heart. Using the name of the Lord while refusing the righteous way of salvation God has established and replacing it with human doctrines—this is the lawlessness revealed in this context.

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These words do not mean that good deeds and obedience are unnecessary. Only, the order must be clear. A sinner does not become a good tree by good deeds and service; rather, the person who has first received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit bears good fruit following the guidance of the Spirit. The saved do not boast of their achievements as the ground of salvation; they believe in the righteousness of the Lord who saved them and reveal that faith by a life of serving the gospel

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 'But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall" (Matthew 7:24–27).

The person who hears the words of Jesus and does them is like a wise man who laid the foundation of his house on the rock. To hear and do here is not merely to know the word as knowledge but to believe with the heart the salvation Jesus fulfilled and to make His word the standard of one's life. The truth that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection is the rock of faith. The person who stands on this foundation, even when his feelings waver or the shortcomings of his flesh are revealed, stands firm relying not on his own deeds but on the righteousness the Lord has

completed.

The rain, the floods, and the winds make us think not only of the trials and tribulations that come during the life of faith but also of the judgment of God that will finally reveal every faith. The two houses, built to look alike, show little difference in calm days, but when the storm comes, their foundations are revealed. The person who has surely received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit returns again to the word of the gospel even when he sees his own weakness, and even before the judgment he stands boldly in the faith that Jesus has removed all his sins.

But the person who hears the words of Jesus and does not believe is like a man who built his house on the sand. A long career of faith, offices, good deeds, fervent emotions, and experiences of miracles may look dependable to people, but they cannot be a foundation that removes sin. Faith built without believing the truth that Jesus took over all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and was judged on the Cross can only collapse before the problem of sin and judgment. The reason its fall is great is that it does not end with the failure of one person's religious life but ends in the loss of everlasting life.

Therefore, this passage is not a word telling us to suspect false prophets unconditionally by their appearance; it is a command to discern by the word of God the gospel they preach and its fruits. True faith lies not in the words *"Lord, Lord"* or in amazing powers but in believing in the salvation of the water and the Spirit that the Father fulfilled through His only begotten Son just as it is. The person who has become a good tree by believing this gospel bears good fruit for the gospel, and, making the word of the Lord his rock, builds a house that does not fall even in trials and judgment.

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The words of Jesus have the authority of heaven that saves sinners and establishes faith on the rock

"And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:28–29).

That Jesus had ended *"these sayings"* means that He had finished the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, which began in Matthew chapter 5. Jesus taught the faith and life of the people of the kingdom of God: the blessings of the people of heaven, the salt of the world and the light of the world, the true meaning of the Law, murder, adultery, and oaths, loving one's enemies, charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting, riches and worry, judging and discernment, the narrow gate and false prophets, and the faith that builds its house on the rock. The crowds heard all these words and were astonished at His teaching.

The reason the crowds were astonished was not merely that the words of Jesus were new or brilliantly phrased. In the words of Jesus there was an authority that man cannot produce. The scribes were men who studied the Law and interpreted it for the people, but they spoke on the basis of the Law already handed down and of various traditions. Jesus, however, did not speak by borrowing the authority of others. Declaring directly, *"I say to you,"* He revealed the original meaning of the Law and the truth of the kingdom of God.

Jesus could speak this way because He is not merely a teacher who knew the Law well but God who gave the Law. Jesus is not one who obtained authority by being recognized by men; He is the Son of God who was with God from the beginning and created all things. Therefore, He had no need to guess at the will of God or to cite the interpretations of other

scholars. Because He Himself is the truth and the life, He spoke with final authority concerning the kingdom of heaven and judgment, sin and righteousness, salvation and destruction.

The authority of Jesus is also different from the power of the world that oppresses people and exalts itself. The power of the world issues commands and demands sacrifice from others, but the authority of Jesus is the authority of life that saves sinners from sin and judgment. Jesus did not only speak words that condemn sinners; He spoke as the One who would Himself save them from that condemnation. Because the One who spoke was Himself the Savior who would carry all the sins of sinners and be judged, His teaching had the power to actually remove sin.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a moral lesson that mends only people's outward appearance. Jesus revealed that the root of murder is in the hatred of the heart, that the root of adultery is in lust, and that even hypocritical charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting cannot be righteousness before God. Anyone who looks at himself in the light of these words can no longer claim to be righteous by his own deeds. The authority of Jesus, who reveals the true meaning of the Law, first exposes people's hidden sins and self-righteousness, making them realize that they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven by their own good deeds.

But the words of Jesus do not end with exposing sin. To save sinners, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came to this earth in a sinless body. And He took on all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John. As the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, He was crucified, shed His blood and died, and rose again from the dead on the third day. Because Jesus actually overcame sin and death, He proclaims with authority that whoever believes this

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truth receives the remission of all sins.

The teaching of the scribes could explain what people must keep, but it could not remove the sin in people's hearts. Religious knowledge and ordinances may help a sinner know his wrongs, but they have no power to wash those sins clean. Jesus, however, took over all the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received the punishment of those sins on the Cross. Therefore, the words of Jesus are not words that merely explain the remission of sins but the words of life that proclaim the fact of the salvation He Himself has completed.

The word of God has the power to accomplish exactly what it says. Just as light came into being when He said, "Let there be light," the words of Jesus that He would save sinners were actually accomplished through His ministry. Human teaching can give its hearers a moment of inspiration or resolve, but it cannot make a sinner new as a righteous person. When a person believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, sin disappears from his heart, the Holy Spirit comes upon him, and he becomes a child who calls God Father—because in the words of Jesus there is the authority that gives life.

The authority revealed in the teaching of Jesus also connects with the earlier words of Matthew chapter 7. Jesus distinguished the good tree from the bad tree and ruled that not everyone who calls out *"Lord, Lord"* enters the kingdom of heaven. He also declared who is the wise man who built his house on the rock and who is the foolish man who built his house on the sand. These verdicts are not the opinions of one religious teacher but the declarations of the Lord who will judge everyone on the last day.

Therefore, the person who hears the words of Jesus must not stop at merely being astonished. The crowds were

astonished at His teaching, but astonishment itself is not the faith that has received the remission of sins. If a person acknowledges the authority of the word yet does not believe that word with his heart, he is like the man who built his house on the sand. True faith is receiving the words of Jesus as the word of God and making the salvation He fulfilled the only foundation of one's soul.

The person who believes the fact that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John no longer sets up his own acts of repentance or good deeds as the ground for the remission of sins. The blood of the Cross was the judgment on the sins He had taken over through His baptism, and the resurrection shows that this salvation has been fully accomplished. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit, relying on the words of Jesus, boldly confesses, "All my sins have disappeared." This confession comes not from emotion or self-conviction but is grounded on the word of the salvation God has fulfilled.

The words of Jesus continue to show their authority in the life that follows the remission of sins as well. Though the weakness of the flesh and the temptations of the world remain with the born-again, if he holds the written word in his heart, he is not dragged along by his own thoughts and circumstances but stands firm in faith. The word makes him discern temptation and drive back the lies of Satan, and it gives him strength to serve the gospel and lead other souls to the way of life. The person who has built his house on the rock is not one who endures because his own will is strong but one who stands firm because he believes the word of the Lord.

On the contrary, if a person exalts human knowledge and religious tradition above the word of God, he remains in teaching like that of the scribes. However refined the logic and

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however fluent the speech, if it leaves out the fact that Jesus took over all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, it cannot lead sinners to the complete remission of sins. The standard for judging whether a teaching is true is not whether it sounds moving but whether it fully preaches the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection testified by the Scriptures and actually makes sinners righteous without sin.

The astonishment the crowds felt is also evidence revealing who Jesus is. Jesus did not expound the Law as one man under the Law; He spoke as the Son of God who would fulfill the Law and save sinners. As He said, He fulfilled all the righteousness of God with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and He still gives the remission of sins and everlasting life to those who believe this gospel. The authority of Jesus is not an authority of words only but the authority of the One who Himself accomplished the salvation He spoke.

Matthew chapter 7 verses 28–29 make everyone who has heard the words of the Sermon on the Mount ask what attitude he should take. It is not enough to praise Jesus as an excellent teacher and admire His words. We must believe in Jesus as God and Savior and receive His words as the rock of our faith. The teaching of Jesus is the word of life that exposes sin, washes it away with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and firmly establishes the saved on the word. Therefore, the person who believes and holds these words in his heart receives the remission of sins, lives following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and leads other souls to the way of salvation with this word of life. ✉

Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 7

[Question] 1. Summarize the central content recorded in Matthew chapter 7 and its teaching on the faith that believes the word.

Matthew chapter 7, as the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, tells how the person who believes in God must treat others, with what faith he must pray, and by what standard he must discern the true gospel from false teachings. In particular, it stresses the fact that we must not stop at hearing the word but must become people who rightly know and believe the will of God and obey in that faith.

First, Jesus told us not to rashly judge and condemn others. It is hypocrisy to point out only the speck in a brother's eye while not seeing the plank in one's own eye. Therefore, we must first examine our own shortcomings and wrongs before the word of God, stand on right faith, and then help our brother. But this does not mean that we should make no discernment at all between good and evil or truth and falsehood. Jesus also told us to discern those who do not know the value of what is holy and of the pearls and who trample on the gospel.

Jesus then taught us to believe in God and pray, saying, *"Ask," "seek,"* and *"knock."* Even parents in the flesh know how to give good things to their children, and the heavenly Father gives even better things to His children who ask in faith. Therefore, the saints must not try to solve their difficulties by their own strength alone but must ask God, and they must treat

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others as they want to be treated.

Jesus told us to abandon the wide gate that leads to destruction and enter the narrow gate that leads to life. The narrow gate is not the way of a religion one may choose just because many people follow it, nor the way of establishing human righteousness. It is the way of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus fulfilled by taking upon His own body all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, dying on the Cross shedding His blood while bearing those sins, and rising again. Receiving the remission of sins through this gospel and entering into the righteousness of God is the faith that enters the narrow gate that leads to life.

Jesus also told us to beware of false prophets, who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are like ravenous wolves. True prophets and false prophets are clearly revealed by their fruits. The fruit here does not mean only an outwardly moral appearance or religious zeal. We must examine whether the word a person preaches leads people to believe the true gospel and receive the remission of sins, or leaves them still sinners relying only on human deeds and self-righteousness. Just as a good tree bears good fruit, a servant of God who has the true gospel leads souls to the remission of sins and the way of life.

Not everyone who calls out to Jesus, *"Lord, Lord,"* enters the kingdom of heaven. Even if someone claims to have prophesied in the name of the Lord, cast out demons, and done many wonders, if he did not know the will of God and practiced lawlessness, he is cast out by the Lord. The will of God is first to believe rightly in the salvation His Son has fulfilled and receive the remission of sins. And the person who has received the remission of sins must unite with the church of God and obey the work of the gospel that saves souls.

Salvation is not obtained by human ability or good deeds, but the faith that has believed the true gospel reveals its fruit in a life that follows the will of God.

Finally, Jesus compared the person who hears His words and does them to a wise man who built his house on the rock. Though the rain, the floods, and the winds strike, the house built on the rock does not fall. On the other hand, the person who hears the word and does not do it is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand, and when tribulations and trials come, his faith collapses.

Therefore, the faith that believes the word is not merely knowing the Scriptures as knowledge or calling on the Lord with the lips. It is accepting just as it is the truth of salvation God has spoken, and praying and obeying with that word as the standard of one's life. Matthew chapter 7 teaches us to build the house of faith on the rock of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to discern falsehood, and to become people who obey God's will and lead souls to life.

[Question] 2. What attitude toward others do the words of Matthew 7:1–2, "*Judge not, that you be not judged,*" require?

These words mean that we must not rashly condemn others when we see their shortcomings and wrongs, or judge as if we ourselves were more righteous. Since no one can fully know another person's circumstances and heart, we must not evaluate him by our own thoughts and feelings alone.

Jesus said that with the standard by which we judge others we too will be judged, and with the measure by which we measure others we too will be measured. It is hypocrisy to be

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strict with another person's small mistakes while being generous with one's own greater wrongs. Therefore, before pointing out a brother's wrong, the saints must first examine their own shortcomings and wrongs before the word of God.

But these words do not mean that we should make no discernment at all between truth and falsehood, good and evil. It is necessary to discern a false gospel and to set right what is wrong with the word. Only, we must not attack and condemn the other person by our own feelings or fleshly standards; we must exhort him with love and a gentle heart, with the word of God as the standard.

Therefore, when dealing with others, we must admit that we too are people with many faults, understand the other person's situation, and have an attitude of patience and forgiveness. Even when a brother has done wrong, the attitude these words require is not to trip him up or display our own righteousness, but to help him stand upright again in faith.

[Question] 3. According to Matthew 7:3–4, what contradiction is there in the person who judges others?

The contradiction of the person who judges others lies in that he sees well and points out the speck in his brother's eye while not realizing the plank in his own eye. That is, he is dull toward his own greater and more serious faults while excessively strict with the small wrongs of others.

People justify their own thoughts and actions, yet when someone else commits a similar wrong, they easily judge and condemn him. And though they themselves have not yet stood upright before the word of God, they say to their brother, *"Let*

me remove the speck from your eye." This is the hypocritical attitude of considering oneself qualified to correct others without knowing one's own state.

Therefore, to set right another person's wrong, we must first examine our own heart and faith in the light of the word of God. The person who admits his own faults and turns back understands his brother's situation rightly and helps him with love and truth, not condemnation.

[Question] 4. Explain the warning of Jesus toward the hypocrite recorded in Matthew 7:5.

Jesus said, *"Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."* A hypocrite is a person who does not look at the great faults and wrongs he himself has, but hunts out and condemns only the small wrongs of others.

"First remove the plank from your own eye"—these words mean that before trying to correct others, we must first examine our own faith, heart, and conduct in the light of the word of God. A person who has not yet received the remission of sins must first believe the true gospel and solve his own problem of sin; and even a saint who has received the remission of sins, if he realizes that his own thoughts, pride, and fleshly judgment have been wrong, must admit it and turn back in faith.

Only after removing his own plank can a person see clearly the speck in his brother's eye. This does not mean leaving a brother's wrong entirely alone; it means not exalting oneself like a righteous judge but helping him with love and gentleness within the word. Closing one's eyes to one's own faults and condemning only others is hypocrisy, but examining oneself

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first, standing upright, and then helping a brother turn back in faith is true love.

[Question] 5. In Matthew 7:6, Jesus said not to give what is holy to the dogs and not to cast pearls before swine; what does this mean?

Here *"what is holy"* and the *"pearls"* refer to the holy word God has given and the gospel of salvation. In particular, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by taking upon His own body all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, dying on the Cross shedding His blood while carrying those sins, and rising again, is that cannot be exchanged for anything.

The *"dogs"* and *"swine"* are a figure for the obstinate people who, not knowing the value of the gospel, mock and trample on it and rather oppose and seek to harm the person who preaches it. This is not an expression that unconditionally despises people of a certain status or nation; it points out the attitude they show before the word of God.

The gospel must be preached to everyone, but we must not endlessly dispute with and force the gospel on a person who has no heart at all to hear the truth and who, having heard the gospel sufficiently, keeps opposing it deliberately. Such a person, far from treasuring the truth, may insult it as if trampling it underfoot, and turn and attack the one who preached the gospel. At such times we must wisely stop speaking and keep our distance.

Therefore, these words do not mean that we should be sparing in preaching the gospel; they mean that when preaching the gospel we must discern the heart and attitude of

the other person. To a person who at first opposes the gospel because he does not know it but who may yet listen to the word, we must explain with patience. But rather than clinging only to a person who arrogantly tramples on and opposes the truth to the end, we must go to other souls who earnestly seek the remission of sins and are ready to receive the gospel.

The saints must know how holy and precious a pearl the gospel they have received is and guard it preciously. And without hating people or rashly condemning them, they must discern within the word those who receive the gospel and those who deliberately trample on it, and wisely carry out the mission of preaching the gospel.

[Question] 6. According to Matthew 7:7–8, what must we do to have perfect faith?

Jesus said, *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."* He also promised, *"For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."* Perfect faith begins with believing the fact that the living God hears and answers the prayers His children offer.

"Ask" means to admit our lack and weakness and pray specifically to God for what we need. *"Seek"* means not to stay still after praying but to look in the word for God's will and the way of solution. *"Knock"* means to believe that God will open the way and to keep going forward in actual obedience.

Man is weak, but when he believes in and depends on God, he becomes strong with the new strength God gives. We must not lose heart because our present circumstances are hard, or rely only on our own strength and calculations; we must pray

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with the assurance that God surely supplies what is needed and opens the way. Even when the answer is not immediately visible, we must not give up but keep asking, seeking, and knocking.

But this promise does not mean that we can receive as it is whatever we ask in order to fill the desires of the flesh. The saints must first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and ask for the wisdom, health, material things, and opportunities to work that are needed for preaching the gospel and serving souls. God hears the prayers that accord with His will and answers with what is best.

Therefore, to have perfect faith we must not know God's promise only as knowledge. We must believe God as our Father and pray, find His will in the word, and believe the answer and actually obey. Believing God's power and faithfulness more greatly than our own weakness and continuing to ask, seek, and knock is the attitude of living by perfect faith.

[Question] 7. In Matthew 7:9–11, what example did Jesus give to explain that God is the One who gives good things?

Jesus gave as an example the relationship between a father in the flesh and his child. No father gives his son a stone when he asks for bread, or a serpent when he asks for a fish. He said that even an evil man knows how to give good things to his own children.

Through this example Jesus taught, *"How much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"* God, who is better and more perfect than parents in the

flesh, does not give His children harmful things as though they were good. God gives His children what is actually beneficial and fitting to His will, at the best time and in the best way.

Therefore, even when what they have asked for is not given immediately in the shape they want, the saints must not doubt God's goodness. They must pray with the faith that God knows their circumstances and needs best, and supplies as good things what is needed for serving the gospel and souls.

[Question] 8. In Matthew 7:12, what teaching did Jesus say is *"the Law and the Prophets"*?

Jesus said, *"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."* It is the teaching to first show to others the love, understanding, help, and respect we want to receive from them.

These words do not stop at the passive attitude of merely not harming others. If we want to be helped when we are in difficulty, we must first help those in difficulty; if we want to be forgiven, we must forgive others; and if we want to receive warm words and treatment, we must first act that way ourselves.

The phrase *"the Law and the Prophets"* means that this principle of love sums up the teaching God gave in the Old Testament concerning relationships between people. The saints who remember the grace and love they received from God must not seek only their own benefit but must consider the situations of others and live as people who benefit their souls and lives.

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[Question] 9. What common features do the several parables in Matthew 7:13–27 have?

The parables in verses 13–27 have in common that they all contrast true faith and false faith, life and destruction, as two opposing ways. The wide gate and the narrow gate, the good tree and the bad tree, the person who does the will of God and the person who practices lawlessness, and the house built on the rock and the house built on the sand are contrasted with each other. Between them there is no spiritually neutral third way.

Looked at only from the outside, the two may appear similar. False prophets also come in sheep's clothing, and those who practice lawlessness also call Jesus *"Lord, Lord"* and claim to have done many things in the name of the Lord. Even the house built on the sand can look similar to the house built on the rock before the rain, the floods, and the winds strike. But the root of that faith and its final outcome are entirely different.

True faith and false faith are not distinguished by how many people there are, how great the religious zeal is, or what powers have been performed. They are revealed through what one believes as the truth of salvation, what fruit that faith bears, and whether one actually obeys the word of God. A bad tree does not become a good tree by piling up many good deeds; one must first believe the true gospel, receive the remission of sins, and become a good tree in order to bear good fruit.

The narrow gate that leads to life is the way of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by taking upon His own body all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John, dying on the Cross shedding His blood while carrying those sins, and rising again.

On the other hand, the way of relying on human righteousness, religious deeds, and one's own zeal while keeping sin as it is in the heart is the broad way that leads to destruction, however many people follow it.

These parables also share the point that the outcome surely appears at the end. The broad way reaches destruction; the tree that bears bad fruit is thrown into the fire; the one who practiced lawlessness is cast out by the Lord; and the house built on the sand falls terribly when the rain, the floods, and the winds strike. On the other hand, the person who enters the gate of life, bears good fruit, and hears and does the words of the Lord obtains salvation and everlasting life.

Therefore, these several parables are a warning not to be deceived by the outward appearance of faith but to examine clearly the gospel one believes and the foundation of one's faith. Only the person who rightly believes God's word of salvation and obeys that word has the true faith that does not fall even before trials and the final judgment.

[Question] 10. According to Matthew 7:13–14, how do the gate that leads to destruction and the gate that leads to life differ?

Jesus said, *"for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it."* The wide gate is the way many people choose without burden. It is the way of relying on one's own thoughts, religious zeal, and good deeds rather than the method of salvation God has established, and of thinking it fine to live following the desires of the world and one's own will. Even if a person outwardly professes to believe in Jesus, if he does not know the true

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gospel of the remission of sins and keeps sin as it is in his heart, he heads in the end toward destruction.

On the other hand, Jesus said, *"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."* The gate that leads to life is the way of salvation God Himself has prepared. It is the way of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by taking upon His own body all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, dying on the Cross shedding His blood while carrying those sins, and rising again.

That this gate is narrow does not mean that God has deliberately made salvation difficult. The gate of salvation is open to everyone, but He called it the narrow gate because few people are willing to abandon their self-righteousness, stubbornness, and existing wrong faith and accept only the righteousness God has fulfilled. People are not willing to accept easily the fact that their own deeds and merits add nothing at all and that they must believe only in the salvation God has fulfilled.

The two gates also differ in the life of walking each way. The broad way looks comfortable because one seeks his own benefit and the world's recognition and lives in the manner of the many. But the narrow way is the way in which the person who has received the remission of sins puts God's will before his own desires and, in union with the church, leads other souls to life. On this way there can be sacrifice and hardship, and one may not be recognized by the people of the world.

Above all, the two gates have entirely different final destinations. However many people enter the wide gate, its end is destruction; but however few find the narrow gate and however difficult its way, its end is everlasting life. Therefore, we must not choose a way by the number of people and the

popularity of the world, but must believe the truth of salvation God has fulfilled and enter the gate of life. And the saints who have entered that gate must live leading other souls also to that way of life.

[Question] 11. According to Matthew 7:15, who are those who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves?

They are the false prophets who outwardly look like servants of God but actually preach a false gospel and lead people's souls to destruction. The *"sheep's clothing"* refers to a gentle and godly appearance, kind words, knowledge of the Scriptures, the office of a pastor, and religious authority. But inside there are greed and falsehood like a wolf that takes the life of the sheep.

A false prophet tries to teach others while he himself has not received the remission of sins through the true gospel and still has sin in his heart. While professing to believe in Jesus, he teaches that a person's sins are washed away only if he offers prayers of repentance daily and piles up good deeds, or he puts forward human effort and merit as conditions of salvation. As a result, those who follow his teaching also keep confessing themselves sinners even after leading a religious life for a long time.

A true servant of God preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John, and completed the remission of sins by dying on the Cross shedding His blood while carrying those sins and rising again. He leads those who believe this gospel to become righteous,

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saved from all the sins of their hearts. But a false prophet hides or distorts this truth of salvation and keeps holding people in sin.

That they plunder does not mean only that they take people's material things. They may force offerings, service, and loyalty to fill their own greed, but the more fearful plunder is teaching people a false way of salvation and robbing them of their hearts, their faith, and their everlasting life. However many people someone gathers and however amazing the powers he seems to perform, if he cannot lead souls to the remission of sins, he cannot be called a true servant of God.

Therefore, the saints must not accept someone as a servant of God only by his office, appearance, or eloquence. They must examine what gospel he preaches, whether those who hear that word actually receive the remission of sins and become righteous, and whether the fruit of serving souls according to God's will appears. Since false prophets hide themselves in sheep's clothing, we must discern all the more carefully with the word as the standard.

[Question] 12. According to Matthew 7:17–19, the fact that a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit shows that the basis for judging a tree is what?

These words show that the basis for judging a tree is not its name or outward shape but the fruit it actually bears. Since fruit is borne according to the root and nature of the tree, good fruit shows that the tree is a good tree, and bad fruit reveals that it is a bad tree.

Spiritually as well, we cannot judge whether someone is a

true servant of God only by his office and fame, or by his godly-looking appearance and words. We must examine what gospel he believes and preaches, and whether his teaching leads people to the true remission of sins and life, or leaves them still in sin. The results that appear through his ministry reveal the essence of his faith and teaching.

Also, a bad tree that bears bad fruit does not become a good tree by making many efforts. One must first believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins, and become righteous, thereby becoming a good tree; and afterward one bears the good fruit of serving God and saving souls. Therefore, it is not a person's good deeds that make him righteous; the faith made new by the true gospel bears the fruit of righteousness.

The words that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire show that the end of false faith and false teaching is judgment. Therefore, the saints must not be deceived by outward appearance but must examine and judge, in the light of the word and the gospel, the root of that faith and the spiritual fruit actually borne.

[Question] 13. How do the words of Matthew 7:16 and 20, *"by their fruits you will know them,"* teach us to discern false prophets?

"By their fruits you will know them"—these words mean that we should discern the true from the false not by a prophet's appearance, office, or words but by the teaching he delivers and the results that appear through it. Just as grapes cannot be picked from thornbushes or figs from thistles, the fruit of the true remission of sins and of life cannot come from

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one who holds a false gospel.

The first fruit to examine is what becomes of the people who hear the gospel he preaches. A true servant of God clearly preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that its hearers believe that all their sins have been washed away and become righteous. But those who follow the teaching of a false prophet, even after attending church for a long time and praying fervently, still confess themselves sinners with sin in their hearts. This is the bad fruit showing that the gospel he preached could not save souls from sin.

We must also examine the fruit that appears in the purpose of his ministry and in his life. A true servant sacrifices himself to save souls and serve the gospel rather than to gain his own honor and riches. But a false prophet, putting forward godly words and appearance, makes people submit to himself, gains material things and honor, and stresses human deeds and religious zeal. Even phenomena that look like miracles or wonders cannot replace the fruit of preaching the true gospel.

Yet we must not immediately condemn someone as a false prophet just by seeing one small mistake or a fleshly shortcoming. The standard of discernment is not whether he lives perfectly without mistakes, but what gospel he believes and preaches, where he leads souls, and what spiritual results he bears as time passes. The saints must not be drawn by someone’s fame or moving words but must discern false prophets with the word of God and the fruit of the gospel as the standard.

[Question] 14. According to Matthew 7:21, what person of faith can enter the kingdom of heaven?

Jesus said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."* Therefore, no one enters the kingdom of heaven just because he calls Jesus Lord with his lips and shows religious zeal.

The will of God the Father is for people to rightly know and believe the salvation He fulfilled through His Son and to receive the remission of sins and everlasting life. Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross shedding His blood while carrying those sins, and rose again, overcoming the power of death. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart and has been washed of all his sins is the person who has received the will of God by faith.

The faith that enters the kingdom of heaven is not a faith that relies on one's own good deeds and merits. However much prayer, service, and offering a person gives, and however much he claims to have performed powers in the name of the Lord, if he has not believed the remission of sins God fulfilled and sin remains in his heart, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Salvation depends not on how much a person has done for God but on whether he believes the righteousness God fulfilled for sinners.

But doing the will of God also does not mean that one may acknowledge the gospel only as knowledge and then live as he pleases. The person who has received the remission of sins through the true gospel comes to live making the word of God the standard of his life, uniting with the church, and serving the

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gospel so that other souls also receive the remission of sins. This obedience is not a merit for earning the qualification to enter the kingdom of heaven but the fruit that appears from the faith of one who has already been saved.

Therefore, it is not the religious person who merely calls out *"Lord, Lord"* who enters the kingdom of heaven, but the person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, been washed of all the sins of his heart, and obtained the righteousness of God. And the person who obeys the will of God following that faith is the person of true faith.

[Question] 15. What kind of spiritual beings are the *"demons"* spoken of in Matthew 7:22?

The *"demons"* spoken of in the Scriptures are not the souls of dead people wandering about the world; they are the fallen angels who follow Satan the devil, who opposes God—that is, evil spirits. They have no visible body, but they really exist and work under the rule of Satan.

Demons deceive people so that they do not believe the word of God, and make them accept false doctrines and religious experiences as if they were the truth. They also stir up fear, greed, and confusion in people's hearts and try to drag them into the way of sin and destruction. Since they can even imitate the Holy Spirit and deceive people by showing visions or strange phenomena, spiritual phenomena must always be discerned with the word of God and the true gospel as the standard.

In verse 22 many people claim to have cast out demons in the name of the Lord, but Jesus did not acknowledge their claims and powers alone as evidence of true faith. Even if there

were phenomena that looked like demons actually being cast out, that alone does not prove that the person has received the remission of sins or is a servant of God. Their claims may be exaggerated or false, and an evil spirit may feign religious power in order to deceive people.

Therefore, demons are evil spiritual beings belonging to Satan, and the true power that overcomes them does not come from human emotion or religious technique. The saints must receive the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and, relying on the word of God and the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts, discern and resist the falsehood of evil spirits.

[Question] 16. What is the final verdict of Jesus on the false prophets recorded in Matthew 7:23?

Jesus pronounces on them the final verdict, *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"* This means that they are not acknowledged as the Lord's people or true servants, and are separated from the Lord forever and judged.

They claimed to have prophesied in the name of the Lord, cast out demons, and done many wonders. But these religious acts and powers could not prove their salvation. Because they did not believe the will of God and the true gospel of salvation but led people's souls into the wrong way following their own thoughts and false teachings, they received the verdict *"you who practice lawlessness."*

The words *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"* do not mean that the Lord once saved them and later abandoned them. They were never people who

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had believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and entered a true relationship with the Lord. They merely put forward the name of Jesus and religious powers and claimed to be the Lord's servants.

Therefore, offices recognized by people and great ministries and powers cannot guarantee salvation at the final judgment. Only the person who has rightly believed God's will of salvation, received the remission of sins, and served God's will within the true gospel is acknowledged as one who belongs to the Lord.

[Question] 17. To what kind of person do Matthew 7:24–25 compare the one who hears the word and does it?

Jesus compared the person who hears His words and does them to a wise man who built his house on the rock. He was not interested only in decorating the outward appearance of the house; he laid its foundation on the solid rock so that it could withstand the rain and the wind.

Here the rock refers to the unchanging word of God, that is, the truth of the true salvation God has fulfilled. Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood while carrying those sins, and rose again, completing salvation. The person who hears this gospel of the water and the Spirit, believes it with his heart, receives the remission of sins, and then obeys with that word as the foundation of his faith and life is the one who hears the word and does it.

The house built on the rock does not fall though the rain descends, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat on it.

In the same way, the person who believes and does the word also meets tribulations, trials, and hardships, but because the foundation of his faith is built on the word of God, he endures to the end and does not fall. Therefore, he is the person the Lord acknowledges as wise.

[Question] 18. In Matthew 7:26–27, whom did Jesus call a foolish man?

Jesus compared the person who hears His words and does not do them to a foolish man who built his house on the sand. He is not a person who never heard the word at all, but a person who heard the word yet did not believe it with his heart and obey it.

The house built on the sand can look similar to the house built on the rock in ordinary times. Likewise, the foolish person may know the Scriptures, call Jesus Lord, and outwardly seem to lead a life of faith. But without believing with his heart the salvation of Jesus Christ, who took all sins upon His body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, he relies on his own thoughts, feelings, religious experiences, and deeds. Therefore, his faith has no solid foundation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When the rain descends, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat on that house, the house built on the sand falls, and its fall is great. This means that not only in tribulations and trials but also when the final judgment comes, the reality of the false faith that did not believe the word is revealed. Therefore, the person who only hears the word and does not do it—the person who follows his own thoughts rather than the word of

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God—is the foolish man the Lord spoke of.

[Question] 19. According to Matthew 7:28–29, how did the crowds respond when they heard the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus?

When Jesus finished the words of the Sermon on the Mount, the crowds were astonished at His teaching. The Scriptures make the reason clear: *"for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."*

The scribes taught mainly by citing and interpreting the Law and the traditions of the forefathers. But Jesus proclaimed the will of God directly, without borrowing the authority of others. Jesus revealed the true meaning of the Law and the sin within man's heart, and spoke with the authority of the Sovereign concerning the true faith that enters the kingdom of heaven and the final judgment.

The crowds felt that the words of Jesus were not ordinary lessons that come from human knowledge, and they were greatly astonished. But merely being astonished and marveling at the word cannot be called having true faith. As Jesus taught earlier, we must believe that word with our hearts and do it, becoming people who build the house of faith on the rock. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not condemn his brother but saves him

< Matthew 7:1-6 >

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. 'Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."

The Lord told us not to condemn our brothers with our own righteousness

In today's Scripture passage Jesus said, *"Judge not, that you*

be not judged" (Matthew 7:1). We must not take these words only to mean that we should never speak of anyone's wrong. Later in the same chapter the Lord told us to beware of false prophets and discern them by their fruits. Therefore, what the Lord forbade is not the work of discerning truth from falsehood, but the hypocrisy of seating oneself in the judge's seat of the righteous and driving only one's brother into the seat of the sinner.

People see the wrongs of others quickly and their own wrongs slowly. When they themselves get angry, they say there were circumstances that made it understandable; when someone else gets angry, they say he has no faith. When they fail to keep a promise, they say it was because of their situation; when a brother fails to keep a promise, they judge his whole character. They magnify the speck in another's eye while failing to see the plank that covers their own.

How is it with you? Have you measured yourself by the very standard you demanded of others? Have you never hidden a fact unfavorable to yourself while telling others to be honest? Have you not coveted recognition and honor while rebuking the greed of others? Before the word of God, there is not one person who can say his own deeds are perfect.

Paul said, *"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things" (Romans 2:1–2)*. Though the shapes of sin differ, the same fundamental desires of sin are in every person's flesh. In some they have been revealed in action, and in others they are still hidden in the heart.

Yet people think that lowering others raises themselves. When they find many faults in a brother, they feel as if they had

become more righteous. It is not so. Pointing at the dirt on another's face does not make my face clean. Speaking ten times of another's sin does not remove even one sin of mine. What removes sin before God is not human criticism or comparison but only the righteousness God has fulfilled, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

See the plank in your own eye before the speck in your brother's eye

Jesus told us to see the plank in our own eye before the speck in our brother's. The plank in the eye does not mean simply one mistake a little bigger than another's. It is the self-righteousness, covetousness, and obstinate thinking that keep us from seeing the word of God rightly. The heart that exalts its own judgment above God's judgment and makes its own deeds the ground of righteousness covers a person's spiritual eyes.

Some people rely on the career of having attended church for a long time. They think they have studied theology, received offices, and know the Scriptures more than others. So even when the Scriptures testify that Jesus took on the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose from death to complete salvation, they do not accept it if it differs from the doctrines they learned before. They place the Scriptures under their own thoughts. This is a plank.

Some people set worldly success at the center of their hearts. They think that if they believe in Jesus, they should earn much money, be healed of diseases, and prosper in everything. They accept the words that help that purpose and push away the words that break their greed. Meanwhile they judge severely a

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brother's small shortcoming. But what must first be removed is not the brother's speck but the plank of covetousness that covers their own eyes.

And some people keep condemning themselves as sinners by looking at the deeds of their own flesh. They believe today's revealed shortcoming more than the word that Jesus received baptism from John and took away all their sins and shortcomings. This too is a plank that exalts one's own judgment above God's verdict. If God has said we have no sin, and we call ourselves sinners because of our feelings, that is not humility; it is not believing the word of God.

To remove the plank is not to put on a humble face or to repeat self-lowering words before others. It is to admit that there is no righteousness in my thoughts and deeds that can save me, and to believe only in the righteousness of salvation God has spoken. When the word and my thoughts differ, I must not correct the word but throw away my thoughts.

The Law is a mirror that shines on the heart

People easily hold up the Law when they see the faults of others and speak of grace when they see their own. But the purpose for which God gave the Law was not for attacking others. The Scriptures say, *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:19–20).*

Before the Law, my own mouth that accused my brother must be shut first. The Law is not a device to prove that I am better than others; it is the word that makes me know that I too

am a sinner who cannot escape the judgment of God. Hating in the heart is also the sin of murder; harboring lust in the heart is also the sin of adultery; and loving riches and self more than God is also idolatry. Who, apart from Jesus the Christ, can become righteous by his own strength through keeping this Law perfectly? No one.

Yet the Law does not remove sin. A mirror shows the stains on the face, but it cannot wash those stains away. The Law exposes sin and stops the mouth, but it cannot give the remission of sins. Sin does not disappear by itself because we realize it much or shed many tears. We must know where sin was transferred and where that sin was judged.

The word of God searches our hearts. It says, *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:12–13).* Whenever we hear the word, before applying it to others, we must see what our own hearts are believing.

We must first know properly what the righteousness of God is

What, then, is the righteousness of God that makes us righteous without sin? The righteousness of God is not a righteousness we have piled up by living virtuously and keeping the Law. It is the right work God Himself did perfectly, in the way He Himself appointed, to save sinners without sin.

Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came to

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this earth in a sinless body. And when He turned thirty, He went to the Jordan River and was baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. The Scriptures testify, *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:13–15).*

The *"all righteousness"* Jesus spoke of means all the right works by which God saved sinners. Just as on the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament the high priest laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed the people's sins onto it, so through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the representative of all mankind, all the sins of the world were transferred onto the sinless body of Jesus. Jesus did not receive baptism from John merely to show an example of humility. He received baptism from John the Baptist in order to take our sins upon His own body and bear them, and so to die on the Cross shedding His blood and rise from death to complete our salvation.

Afterward Jesus went up to the Cross carrying the sins of the world He had taken on. Since *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23),* Jesus, who bore sin, received the judgment of God on the Cross and died shedding His blood. And by rising from death in three days He overcame the power of sin and death and completed our salvation. That Jesus took on the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, carried those sins and was judged on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and rose from death, saving us from all sin and condemnation—this is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If we speak only of the Cross and leave out the baptism Jesus received from John, we cannot explain when and how sin passed

over to Jesus. On the other hand, if we speak only of the fact that sin was transferred through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, while leaving out the blood, the death, and the resurrection of the Cross, that too is not the complete gospel. The transfer of sin, the judgment of sin, and the resurrection are the one connected salvation of God.

The righteousness of God is not that He shut His eyes and called sinners righteous while their sins remained. God had all our sins actually transferred through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, had the price of those sins actually paid with blood and death on the Cross, and opened everlasting life through the resurrection. This work—moving sin by the appointed way, judging it according to justice, and completely saving those who believe—is the righteousness of God.

When we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the plank of self-righteousness is removed

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit did not become righteous because his deeds improved. He is righteous because he received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of God completed by Jesus Christ. The flesh is still weak, makes mistakes, and the desires of sin can arise. But because Jesus took on even all those sins and judged them, there is no sin in the heart of the one who believes.

We must make this distinction clear. It is not that the person who has received the remission of sins has become perfect even in his flesh. Even the righteous, if they follow the flesh, can do wrong and hurt their brothers. That is why the guidance of the word and the exhortation of the church are needed. But the remission of sins Jesus completed is not canceled because of the

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shortcomings of the flesh. The ground of salvation is not our deeds but the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When we believe this gospel, the plank of self-righteousness is removed. Because we know that we too were sinners bound for destruction and the Lord saved us freely, we cannot exalt ourselves before others. At the same time, the plank of looking only at our own shortcomings and condemning ourselves as sinners again is also removed. For we believe the word that God has removed all our sins.

Which do you believe more? The appearance of your flesh revealed today, or the salvation Jesus fulfilled with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection? We must not rationalize the weakness of the flesh as not being sin. A wrong must be admitted as a wrong, and we must turn from it. But we cannot nail Jesus to the Cross again to wash that wrong once more. We must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which He already took on and judged all sins, and within that faith turn from wrong thoughts and actions.

The person who has first received the remission of sins can rightly remove his brother's speck

The Lord said, *"Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5)*. He did not tell us to ignore our brother's speck after removing our own plank. The Lord's purpose is not to make us leave one another's wrongs alone, but to make us save our brothers rightly without condemning them.

The righteous who have received the remission of sins do not put forward their own righteousness when they exhort a brother. They know that they too would have perished apart from the

Lord's grace. Therefore they do not try to defeat the brother and push through their own words; they help his soul believe the word and stand. Even right words, spoken with hatred and pride, can wound the brother's eye still more.

The Scriptures say, *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:1–2)*. We must set right, but gently, and while looking at the other person we must also look back on ourselves.

To be gentle does not mean to speak the truth vaguely. If a brother's wrong is hindering the gospel and harming other souls, we must speak clearly. But we should speak not with the heart that says, "You are wrong and I am right," but with the heart that says, "Let us return to the word and see how the Lord saved us."

If a brother has fallen because of the weakness of the flesh, rather than driving him into the seat of the sinner, we must build up his faith again within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must lead him to believe again the word that Jesus took on all his sins too through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received all the judgment by dying on the Cross shedding His blood, and completed salvation by rising from death. The gospel is not a word that sides with sin; it is the power that makes the righteous who have received the remission of sins turn from the wrongs of the flesh and do righteousness.

The precious pearl is the gospel of the water and the Spirit

If we take verse 1 of the passage alone and forbid all discernment, we cannot explain verse 6. Only when we discern

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what is holy and what the pearl is, and who tramples it underfoot and opposes it, can we obey this word. The Lord told us not to condemn people by our own feelings, but He never told us not to distinguish truth from falsehood.

Jesus said, "*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24)*. Judgment by appearance decides true and false by the size of the chapel, the history of the denomination, and the eloquence of the leader. Righteous judgment looks by the standard of the written word. Above all, we must confirm when and how sin was transferred to Jesus, how the price of that sin was paid, and whether sin remains in the heart of the one who believes.

If someone speaks of the blood of the Cross but leaves out the fact that Jesus took on the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, he is not preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit in full. Jesus carried those sins of the world, was judged on the Cross, died shedding His blood, and completed salvation by rising from death. If a person says he believes in Jesus and yet sin remains as it is in his heart, he must examine again what gospel he has heard. Discerning this is not criticism that hates a person; it is the righteous judgment that saves souls.

The pearl is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This gospel is the truth of life that cannot be bought with money or produced by human wisdom. But we must not treat alike the person who does not yet know the gospel and the person who, having heard it sufficiently, mocks it and deliberately opposes it. To the one who does not know, we must explain with patience; but we must not keep entrusting the truth to one who tramples it and seeks to harm those who preach it. We must deliver it to other souls who want to hear.

This discernment too must not be done by our own feelings.

We must not belittle and condemn a person because he opposed us once. The person who questions and confirms, the person who wants to hear more because he does not yet understand, is not an enemy of the gospel. Rather, to such a person we must open the Scriptures and deliver more accurately the transfer of sin through the baptism received from John, the judgment of the Cross, and the resurrection.

We did not receive the remission of sins by our own deeds

The words of Matthew chapter 7 verses 1 to 6 are not simply a human lesson to "think well of others." They tell us first to discover before the word the plank of self-righteousness, covetousness, and unbelief, and to become people who have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then they tell us not to condemn our brothers but to set them right gently, and at the same time to discern and guard the pearl-like gospel.

We do not receive the remission of sins by doing good deeds. Nor do we become righteous because we did not criticize others. Jesus took on all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, carried those sins and was judged on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and completed our salvation by rising from death. Only when we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart do we receive the remission of sins and become righteous.

After becoming righteous, we must not trust our own flesh. When we see a speck in another person, we must first examine whether self-righteousness and emotion are mixed in our own hearts. And we must exhort our brother with the word so that he

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may be saved. This is not a condition of salvation but the fruit of faith borne in the righteous who have received the remission of sins.

What is the plank that covers your eyes? Is it the heart that wants to rise above others? The material things and honor of the world? The doctrines you learned before and your own convictions? Or the condemnation that believes the shortcomings of your flesh more than God's salvation? Lay all of it down before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If you believe only the righteousness God has fulfilled, you will see clearly. And the person who sees clearly does not kill the weak brothers around him but saves them. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The child of God who has received the remission of sins asks, seeks, and knocks in faith

< Matthew 7:7-12 >

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

The one who can call God Father

Jesus said, *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7)*. People easily think of these words only as a method of getting what they want. They think that if they ask much and act zealously, God will finally change His mind and give. But the words we must see first in this passage are *"your Father."*

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Who can call God Father? In the sense that all people are creatures, all have been made by God; but no one automatically becomes a child of God while keeping sin as it is in his heart. The person who has received the remission of sins, in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells, can call God his own Father. Therefore this promise of prayer is not a word by which human devotion and deeds bargain with God; it is a word by which a child who has received the remission of sins believes in and depends on the good Father.

When a child asks his father for bread, he does not calculate his own merit. He does not say, "I did three good deeds today, so please give me one loaf of bread." He asks because he is hungry and because he knows his father loves him. The father, too, does not give bread as wages; he gives because it is his own child. The ground of prayer is not our devotion but the relationship of Father and child.

How, then, do we become children of God? We do not become children by living virtuously and praying much. We must first believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit completed by Jesus Christ and receive the remission of all our sins. Only when the problem of sin, which made us enemies of God, is solved does the Holy Spirit come into the heart, and by the Spirit we can call God Father.

We become children through Jesus, who took on the sins of the world

To make sinners His children, God sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to this earth. Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came in a sinless body, and at thirty He was baptized by John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Through the baptism He

received from John the Baptist, Jesus took on and bore all the sins of the world on His own body, was judged on the Cross, died shedding His blood, and completed our salvation by rising from death.

Concerning the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the Scriptures say, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15)*. Why did the sinless Son of God have to receive the baptism that sinners received? It was to take over our sins, the sins of the world. It was to fulfill all the righteousness that saves sinners by transferring sin to Jesus in the right way God appointed. Jesus thus carried the sins transferred to Him by the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, died shedding His blood, and completed salvation by rising from death.

Jesus went to the Cross carrying the sins of the world. There He received the judgment of God in our place and died shedding His blood. It was not that One without sin was judged for nothing; because Jesus had taken on and borne our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He paid the price of those sins. And by rising from death in three days He overcame sin and death and completed our salvation.

That Jesus took on all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, carried those sins and was judged on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and saved us from all sin and condemnation by rising from death—this is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who believes this gospel is a righteous person who has received the remission of all sins, past, present, and future. Though his flesh is weak, there is no sin in his heart, and he is a child of God who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift.

This is the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God

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is not a righteousness a sinner piles up with prayers and good deeds to be recognized by God. It is the right work God did to save sinners without sin: He Himself transferred sin to His Son through John the Baptist, judged that sin justly on the Cross, and raised His Son to complete salvation. We became children by believing this righteousness of God.

Therefore we must not turn the word *"Ask"* into a condition of works for salvation. We do not receive the remission of sins because we prayed much. Nor do we become children of God because we fasted long and knocked earnestly. The person who has become a child by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit asks, believing the Father's promise.

The one who admits his lack asks

To ask is to admit that we lack something. The proud do not ask, because they think they know everything and can do everything. But even the righteous who have received the remission of sins are weak in the flesh, lack wisdom, and do not know what lies ahead. We have received salvation completely, but that does not mean we can live on this earth by our own strength.

Many people, when a problem arises, put their own calculations and actions first before praying. They go around looking for people, try all their own methods, and only at the last pray to God. This is because they do not believe God as the living Father. The person of faith is not one who folds his hands and does nothing; he is one who first asks God for help and acts believing that He will give.

The Scriptures say, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it*

will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind" (James 1:5–6). Admitting lack is not a shameful thing. The problem is pretending to know everything while lacking. God does not reproach the child who asks; He gives wisdom.

What must we ask for? The person with sin in his heart must first of all ask for the truth of the remission of sins. He must ask to be allowed to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately. The righteous who have already received the remission of sins must ask for the wisdom, workers, health, material things, and ways needed for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel. We may ask for the needs of the flesh as well, but we must examine before God what we intend to use them for.

Prayer is like the breathing of faith. Just as no one breathes once and never breathes again for the rest of his life, saying that we received the remission of sins once and therefore no longer need to pray is not living faith. Salvation was completed once and for all, but we must receive the Father's help daily. Prayer is not an act that supplements salvation; it is the relationship in which the saved child lives depending on the Father.

The one who wants to please the Father's will seeks

The person who has asked does not merely sit still. He seeks in the word what the will of God is. He does not fix in advance the outcome he wants and demand only God's approval; he examines what way pleases the Father. If prayer and the word are separated, it is easy to mistake one's own desires for the will of God.

It is the same with the remission of sins. If a person with sin

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in his heart asks for the remission of sins, he must seek in the Scriptures the way of salvation God has prepared. Sin does not disappear because one has felt a great emotion. Dreaming a dream, speaking in tongues, or being healed of a disease is not evidence of having received the Holy Spirit. We must find in the written word where sin was transferred to Jesus and where the price of that sin was paid.

John the Baptist testified the day after Jesus was baptized by him: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29)* Why did Jesus carry away the sin of the world? Because He had taken it on through the baptism He received from John the Baptist the day before. Why did He die on the Cross shedding His blood? Because He was judged for the sins He had taken on. Why did He rise from death? To overcome sin and death and give everlasting life to those who believe.

The righteous who seek the will of God do not ask only that their own desires be fulfilled. They seek which choice will spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit more widely and benefit souls. When they look for a place to work, they do not look only at the way that earns much money; they look for the way in which they can work honestly and serve the gospel. When they raise up a person, they do not look only at eloquence; they examine whether he believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart and wants to follow the Lord's will.

Seeking requires patience. We must not read the Scriptures once and, because we do not understand, say there is no truth in them. Nor must we look for a way once and, because no way appears, conclude that God does not answer. We must keep watching what God shows us within the word, and if our thinking is wrong, turn from it before the word.

The child of God who has received
the remission of sins asks, seeks, and knocks in faith

The one who believes the word knocks

To knock is the action of going right up to the door and stretching out one's hand. It is not sitting in the room waiting for the door to open by itself. If we have asked God for the way and found that way in the word, we must now actually step forward in faith. Prayer and action are not opposites. The prayer of faith makes us prepare and move because we believe God will open.

If a farmer prays for rain but does not sow seed, this cannot be called faith that waits for a harvest. If we pray for the door of gospel preaching to be opened but preach the word to no one, we are not knocking. If we have asked God to send souls, we must prepare the word to deliver, look for ways to meet them, and actually open our mouths and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Some doors may not open at the first knock. At such times we must not conclude that God has broken His promise. It may not yet be the time, we may need more preparation, or God may be leading us to find another door. Breaking down one door by one's own stubbornness is not faith. We must keep asking and seeking within the word and discern the door God opens.

Here too we must not forget the order. It is not that God makes us His children because we acted. We knock because we have already become children through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and because we believe the Father has promised. Works work together with faith, but works cannot replace the salvation of Jesus Christ.

Nor can one person do all the work of preaching the gospel. One preaches the word, another organizes materials, another helps with translation and technical skills, and another serves with needed material things. When each knocks on the door in faith at the place he has received, God makes the work join

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together and opens the door for the gospel to enter other souls.

God, who gives good things to the children who ask

Jesus said that even an evil man knows how to give good things to his own children. How much more, He said, will the Father in heaven give good things to the children who ask! The assurance of prayer lies not in how long we have spoken but in how good the Father is.

If a child asks for a dangerous knife, a good parent does not hand it over as asked. The child may think he has been refused, but the parent is protecting him. We too can think that money, success, and comfort are always the best things. But if they would make us proud and draw us away from the gospel, God may withhold them or delay the time.

We must not think we have received a stone and a serpent because the answer differs from the shape we imagined. God sometimes gives us the faith to overcome a hardship rather than removing it at once, and He subdues our thoughts to the word rather than changing our circumstances. Even if it is hard for the flesh, if we come to abandon our own strength and depend on the Father, that too is an answer good for the soul.

The Gospel of Luke states this good thing more clearly: *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:13)* This does not mean that we buy the Holy Spirit with the merit of much prayer. Nor does the Holy Spirit dwell together with sin in a heart that has sin.

God opens the way for the person who asks for the remission of sins to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And to the person who has received the remission of sins by believing with

the heart the fact that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift. Therefore the best things a sinner must ask for first are not the success of the world but the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit.

We must not ask for the greed we want

The promise *"Ask"* is not a spell by which we obtain everything we want according to our greed. The Scriptures say, *"You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures" (James 4:2–3).* If we ask in order to rise above others, make our own names known, and enjoy only the pleasures of the flesh, it is not prayer for the Father's will.

Teaching that if we believe in Jesus well we will surely become rich, be free of disease, and succeed in everything we do is a religion that feeds human covetousness. Jesus is not a means of fulfilling our greed but the Lord who saved us from sin and condemnation. The purpose for which we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is also not to obtain worldly wishes but to obtain the remission of sins and everlasting life.

There is desire even in the flesh of the righteous who have received the remission of sins. So when we pray, we must examine what we are asking for. We must ask whether, if we obtain this, the gospel will be preached more and souls and the church will benefit, or whether only our own name will be exalted. If we find we have been asking wrongly, we should not condemn ourselves as having become sinners again; we should

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turn our thoughts and ask for the Father's will.

There is boldness in the prayer that asks according to the will of God. *"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 John 5:14–15).* Prayer for one's own greed wavers when the answer is delayed, but prayer for the will of God can wait, believing the Father's promise.

The righteous who have received the remission of sins ask for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel

In Matthew chapter 6 Jesus said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).* The person who has not received the remission of sins must first ask that his own soul believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and be saved. The person who has received the remission of sins must ask that the righteousness of God be delivered to other souls as well and that the kingdom of God be widened.

The righteous are not people who never ask for the needs of the flesh. They tell the Father about food and clothing, health, workplaces, and family matters. Only, the center of their purpose changes. They ask for what is needed not to live comfortably for themselves alone but to serve the gospel, care for their families and the church, and do the work God has entrusted to them.

After praying, we must seek and knock. We must seek how to deliver the gospel to those who have not heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit, look for ways to cross over language

and distance where they block the way, and examine where to use the skills, time, and material things God has given. We must actually begin, even with a small thing. God uses prepared vessels and opens the way to the one who knocks in faith.

But we must not boast that we produced results by asking, seeking, and knocking. It is God who opened the way; the power of the gospel is in the word; and it is the Lord who saves souls. We only obeyed, believing the Father would give. Even when many fruits of faith are borne, we must not turn that merit into our own righteousness.

The one who has first received God's love can share His grace

After the words about asking, seeking, and knocking, Jesus said, *"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12)*. We must not pass over the *"Therefore"* here. The child who has received good things from the Father does not clutch what he has received for himself alone but gives to others.

These words, too, do not mean that we are saved by good deeds. We do not obtain the remission of sins as the merit of treating others well. Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged on the Cross, died shedding His blood, and saved us freely by rising from death. The person who has first received this love and these good things shares with his neighbors the grace he has received.

When we were in sin, we would have wanted someone to deliver to us the accurate gospel of the water and the Spirit. If so, we must first approach those who have not yet received the remission of sins. If we want someone to listen patiently to our

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questions, we too must listen to the questions of others. If we want a brother to pray for us in hard times, we too must first pray for his burdens.

The best treatment we can give is to deliver the gospel of life to a soul. Giving food to the hungry and caring for the sick are also precious. But help for the flesh alone cannot save anyone from the everlasting judgment. While helping the flesh, we must deliver the word of the remission of sins that Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection.

We must live asking, seeking, and knocking in faith

What are you asking for now? If there is sin in your heart, ask first for the truth of the remission of sins rather than the things of the world. Seek in the Scriptures the gospel of the water and the Spirit by which Jesus fulfilled all righteousness. Do not knock on the door of your own good deeds and prayers of repentance; come before the door of life that Jesus opened with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, and believe.

If you are a person who has already received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe that God is your Father. Do not try to solve problems by your own strength alone; ask the Father first. Seek His will in the word. When the will you have found is clear, prepare in faith and actually knock on the door.

Do not lose heart even when the result of your action is not soon visible. The Father does not give His children stones and serpents. He knows better things than what we asked, and He

answers at the time and in the way beneficial to the gospel and to souls. Even when the answer is delayed, we must not doubt the Father's goodness but wait in faith.

Jesus came to this earth by the Holy Spirit, and in the body of flesh He received baptism from John the Baptist, taking on all the sins of mankind onto His own body. Bearing those sins, He was judged in our place on the Cross as the price of sin, died shedding His blood, and rose from death in three days, accomplishing our salvation completely. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit is a righteous person without sin and a child of God who has received the Holy Spirit. The life of asking, seeking, and knocking is the fruit of faith by which this child lives believing in the Father.

Therefore ask. Seek. Knock. But do not try to buy salvation with works. First believe the righteousness God has completed and receive the remission of sins. And as a child, ask for the kingdom and righteousness of God, and deliver to other souls as well the best gift, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is the prayer of faith the Lord taught in Matthew chapter 7, and the way the righteous who have received the remission of sins live. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Enter by the narrow gate

< Matthew 7:13-27 >

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' 'Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 'But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds

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blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

The Lord spoke to us who believe in Jesus, and He also spoke to all people. His word is this: enter by the narrow gate.

He said, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13–14).* The Lord said that the narrow gate is the very gate of life.

Yet many people who say they believe in Jesus do not know this word. Rather than entering by the narrow gate, they consider entering by the wide gate natural, and they like it.

The Christianity of this age that loves the wide gate

When we look at those who lead worship and those who attend worship within Christianity today, there are many who fall below common sense. Those who preach the word must know it in their own consciences. Without being born again themselves and without knowing the truth, they speak to others. The audience sitting and listening is the same. Even by common sense alone the content is impossible to sit through, yet they sit and listen as they are.

Having worldly knowledge does not necessarily make one smart. However sensible a person may be, once he falls into a wrong religion, he listens like all the rest. What is the reason? The preacher preaches the wide gate, and the hearers also strive to enter by the wide gate. So their hearts agree, and one preaches

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well and the others listen well.

Such Christian believers are truly remarkable. Some know the word well, and some chatter without knowing it. A certain church abroad holds its worship in a chapel as large as a big indoor stadium. Countless people gather, listen to sermons, sing praises, and say they believe. But if we look into it closely, it is a very wide gate.

What they preach is mostly commonsense talk: the talk that husband and wife should love each other and live in peace, the talk that if we believe in God we receive blessings. Or the talk that even though we have sin, if we only believe in Jesus as the Savior, God the Father counts us as having no sin. The talk that it is hard for people to get along with one another, but if we live for the Lord, the Lord blesses us and fills our needs.

Let me give an example. A man in our country who ministers to hundreds of thousands of gathered people told this story. A woman married into a family that did not believe in Jesus, and she was severely persecuted for going to church. She was even hit with a stone so that the back of her head was split open. She lived that life of faith and then departed this world, and in the heavenly kingdom, it was said, a diamond was found set in the back of her head. The story is that she received a reward for the merit of enduring persecution and attending church. In the end it means that whoever believes in Jesus, endures persecution, and strives diligently receives many rewards in the heavenly kingdom. This is precisely the story that tells people to enter by the wide gate.

A pastor abroad preaches like this: his church was in great difficulty and hardship, but thanks to the early members who gave offerings and served with their bodies, it has today become a great worldwide church. He says that when they gathered offerings and helped the poor, the poor all came to live well. God,

he says, blesses those who serve much. Hearing that sermon, the audience receives grace and sheds tears, and the preacher sheds tears too. But this also is leading people to enter by the wide gate.

The narrow gate is the very gate of life

But the Lord did not speak that way. He said, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:13–14)*. If we enter by the narrow gate, we obtain life. Yet few find the gate of life. Why do few find it? Because the way is narrow and rough. Even so, we must enter by the narrow gate to obtain life.

What, then, must the church preach? It must preach what grace the Lord has given us and how He removed all our sins. It must preach the fact that the Lord removed our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It must preach that Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins, carried those sins to the Cross and was judged, died shedding His blood, and rose again. If those who hear this word truly believe, how could we keep still? We must lead still more people in through the narrow gate.

When we preach this word and hear this word, our hearts are truly refreshed and thankful. The Lord bore our sins with His baptism, took over those sins and carried them, and was judged on the Cross. He thus washed away all our sins, received all the judgment for those sins, and enabled us to enter the kingdom of God at any time. We must give thanks for this fact.

But those who preach the wide gate do not talk about these things. They do not talk about the work that solved the problem

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of sin in a person's soul. They do not talk about leading others in through the narrow gate to receive the remission of sins. They only say that they served the Lord much and were blessed in the flesh, that they believed in Jesus and were healed, that they believed in Jesus and their homes became harmonious. These days in Korea, lecturing on how a husband and wife can live in harmony without quarreling draws great crowds. All such things are the wide gate. The Lord told us to strive to enter by the narrow gate, and He said that everyone who enters by the narrow gate obtains life. Yet people keep talking about the wide gate and keep leading people to the wide gate.

Beware of false prophets in sheep's clothing

Who, then, are those who lead people to this wide gate? As the Lord said, they are false prophets. "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15)*. False prophets come before us wearing sheep's clothing. But in fact they kill our souls, take our life and material things, and carry off even our time and thoughts. Outwardly they look like sheep, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

People who do not know this simply follow, because the words to live virtuously and kindly sound right. But the reason the Lord speaks this way is that such false prophets exist. They are fundamentally not born again. They are people who became ministers without receiving the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So they bear bad fruit. The Lord spoke of this with the parable of the trees.

"You will know them by their fruits"

The Lord said, *"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (Matthew 7:16–18)*. He explains this word over and over.

Those who lead people to the broad way and themselves follow the broad way are people who are not born again. They are not people who have entered the narrow gate and obtained new life. They are people who became ministers without being born again by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Such people are bad trees whom God does not acknowledge. Therefore, whatever they do all their lives, in the end they bear bad fruit. Though they make all kinds of gestures before people and seem to do good works, where does the result go? The Lord said that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. That is, it is thrown into hell.

Those called ministers should lead people to the narrow way, but instead they lead them to the broad way. They seek recognition before people and put forward their own rightness. They sing praises earnestly and strive to look sincere and faithful like those who follow the Lord's will. They try to live that way themselves and lead people to live that way. But in fact all of it is false. If a man is not born again himself, how can he lead people to the right way? Watching ministers who lead people to the broad way appear on television, I feel truly frustrated. They read the passage aloud and still do not know what to say about it, yet they consider themselves quite outstanding.

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What is the use of succeeding in ministry?

Some boast that they graduated from seminary and ministered at a large church with great success. They speak of it as a great thing that a fellow minister leaving this world entrusted his funeral to them, or asked them to officiate a wedding. But what great things are those? However much recognition one receives before people, what is the use? If in the end he does not know or believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has sin in his heart, all of it is vain.

For example, what good is it to build a chapel of many acres and have three hundred thousand, five hundred thousand, or a million members attending? If he himself ends up going to hell, it is of no use. The Lord said He will cut down such a tree and burn it in the fire. What great success is it to succeed in one's ministry and hand down the chapel and the congregation to one's child? True success is one's own soul receiving the remission of sins before God. It is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of sins, and becoming God's people. *"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered" (Psalms 32:1).* To receive that grace of salvation, live by faith, and enter the everlasting kingdom of heaven when the Lord calls—to obtain everlasting life—that is a truly successful life.

It is the same with church members. What good is it to gather in such numbers and hold worship? If there is sin in one's heart, what is the use? Even if one hears a sermon about how God acknowledged Abraham's faith by providing the offering He prepared as Jehovah-jireh when Abraham was about to offer his son, if there is sin in one's own heart and one is going to hell, what is the use? However well one eats and lives, what of it? Though one offers worship to God, gives tithes and thanksgiving

offerings, strives hard, and does many right deeds of his own, if in the end he walks the broad way and goes to hell, what is the use?

The Lord told us to strive to enter by the narrow way. He said that those who go the broad way enter destruction, and those who go the narrow way obtain life. Only, the way is rough, so few find it. Every minister and every layman must have seen this word at least once. If so, each must consider whether he is now walking the broad way or the narrow way. If a person believes in Jesus while sin remains in his heart, he is in the end walking the broad way. Even if on this earth a husband and wife are harmonious, the children are raised well, and the business succeeds, if at the last one goes to hell, how could that be success?

Present success is not the only success. The one who laughs at the last is the one who has truly succeeded. To laugh at the last, one must at least receive the remission of sins. The person who receives the remission of sins, knows the will of God, and lives in line with that will laughs truly at the last. There is no other way to laugh at the last but that way. Yet many people fail to do so, and it is truly frustrating.

In the world there are teachers of religion who teach that if you live virtuously you go to heaven, while saying that they themselves do not know whether they will go to heaven or hell. Since they themselves do not know, they teach that to avoid hell one must simply live virtuously. And ministers who are not born again are similar to this.

A well-known minister teaches seminary students while talking about predestination. He says that if you see yourself believing in Jesus and coming to church, you have been chosen; and if you try to believe but cannot, you have not been chosen. Yet he says that whether he himself will enter heaven, only God knows. If someone asks what happens if you believe in Jesus and

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later go to hell, he answers that then it cannot be helped. Those who pretend humility like this are the very ones who are false. Everyone who does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a false prophet and a heretic, and in the end goes to hell. So many are the people who walk this broad way.

Among the popular ministers who appear on television there are also such people. When I see them, I even feel ashamed. They open the Scriptures and talk, yet they cannot deliver properly even one verse of what the Scriptures say. They patch things together carelessly, and still the people listening below enjoy it. Their popularity is enormous. No one knows how many people are heading toward destruction on that broad way. The one who entices and the one who is enticed are entering destruction together.

"He who does the will of My Father in heaven"

The Lord spoke like this: *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21–23).*

Saying Lord, Lord means calling Him so because one believes. But not everyone who says Lord, Lord enters the kingdom of heaven; only he who does the will of the Father in heaven enters. What, then, is the Father's will? The Father's will was to send His Son to this earth, have Him baptized by John the Baptist, have Him die on the Cross, and have Him rise from death. It was the Father's will to remove our sins and have His

Son judged in our place, to save us and make us people without sin. Therefore we believe in Jesus Christ, receive the remission of sins, and enter the kingdom of heaven.

Though they say Lord, Lord, He does not know them

The people who walk the narrow way are one thing, but those who walk the broad way say this on that day: that they played the prophet in the name of the Lord, cast out demons in the name of the Lord, and did many wonders in the name of the Lord. Playing the prophet here means teaching and preaching to people.

Truly, there is no end to what we can tell and teach people. We tell them that Jesus is the Son of God. We also tell them that Jesus is God Himself. We preach that Jesus, for our sake, received baptism from John the Baptist and bore all the sins of the world, that He hung on the Cross and suffered bitterly, receiving all the judgment of all our sins, and so became our Savior. Whoever believes in that Jesus receives the remission of all sins. Whoever believes in Jesus as his own Savior, like the thief on one side of the Cross, is washed of all his sins. The one who carries out this ministry of making Him known is the prophet. We ought to play this kind of prophet. That is, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

They also say they cast out demons in the name of the Lord. But demons leave when a person believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins in his heart. When a person abandons his own thoughts, admits his wrongs before God, and knows, believes, and gives thanks that the Lord bore all those sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received all the judgment on the Cross, the demons

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depart. What is the use of driving out demons by force? If there is sin in the heart, the demons come in again. If a person hides his sin before God, the demons rule over him.

The way demons leave is simple. Admit your wrongs before God and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then the demons cannot dwell in that body and depart at once. However much one lays on hands and strives, it is useless. That is the demons playing tricks. Shamans, false prophets, and those who claim to believe in Jesus and cast out demons are in fact all servants of the devil. Therefore the Lord said to them, *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23).*

There are those who minister, play the prophet, cast out demons, and lead people to the broad way without even having received the remission of sins. They say that if you believe in Jesus you become rich, your diseases are healed, demons depart, things go well on this earth, and husband and wife live in harmony. They say that believing in Jesus brings happiness, and they make people pursue only the happiness of the flesh. Such people are the very false prophets and leaders to the broad way. These people in the end enter the way of destruction and go to hell. And there are truly many of them.

In this age there is no one who tells them that they are going the way of destruction. It is by no means rude to diagnose accurately a person who cannot see, tell him his condition, and help him stand on his own. Rather, the name of the disease must be diagnosed rightly. Treating a person who cannot see as if he could see is the real problem. Likewise, if we cannot call a false prophet a false prophet, that is the real problem. That is the foolish thing.

The house built on the rock and the house built on the sand

To such people the Lord spoke like this: *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall" (Matthew 7:24–27).*

The person who hears the Lord's words and does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. Who, then, is the person who hears the Lord's words and cannot do them? Though the Lord did not say it directly, He is saying it all indirectly. Those who hear the Lord's words and cannot do them are all false prophets, those who practice lawlessness, those who will later be cast out by the Lord and go to hell. He is saying that there are such people even among those who believe in Jesus.

The person who can do the word of God

Who, then, cannot do the Lord's words? The person whose heart has not received the remission of sins. The person who has not received the remission of sins in his heart because he does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot do them even if he tries. Though he wants to live according to the Lord's will, he cannot. Though he wants to save his neighbor, he cannot; though he wants to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit,

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he cannot. Because he himself does not know it. Though he wants truly to love and understand that person, though he wants to give him life and lead him to the way of life, he cannot do so.

What is the reason? Because the Holy Spirit is not in his heart. Because he has not become a man of God. A sinner can never do it. Even when he seems to do something right, it is only putting forward his own rightness. It is a rightness never acknowledged before God. It is not the rightness of faith but the rightness of the flesh, not the faith that believes in the righteousness of God. He said, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39)*; can a sinner do that? He cannot. No one can reach that place.

In the end such a person has built the house of his faith on the sand. The floods mean a great deluge. When a great stream of water comes down, the house built on the sand collapses as the sand is swept away. But the house built on the rock stands firm even when the water rushes against it, for the water all flows away below.

The person who can hear and do the word of God is the person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He is the one walking the narrow way, the one who has entered the way of life. Only such a person does true good and truly loves. However excellent a minister may be, however hard he works at social welfare, helps his neighbors, and leads people to believe in Jesus, if he cannot deliver the gospel of the water and the Spirit that washes the heart white as snow, it is of no use. If he himself neither knows nor believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he cannot do the word of God even when he hears it.

Therefore the Lord said, *"and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall" (Matthew 7:27)*. However well one leads

a life of faith believing only in the blood of Jesus, however much one plays the prophet, casts out demons, gives many offerings, and offers oneself, whether one is an elder, a senior deaconess, a pastor, a moderator of the general assembly, or a bishop in the church, even a world-famous pastor—if he cannot hear and do the Lord's words, he is like a man who built his house on the sand. In the end they all go to hell.

They are not those who entered by the narrow gate but those who entered by the wide gate, and those who lead people in through the wide gate. The Lord says that the house of their faith collapses. When the judgment comes, everyone is judged. *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).* That judgment is decided by whether one has sin or not. That is, He judges by whether one believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit or not. And it is also decided by whether, after believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one lived obeying God's will, or left the church and lived only for oneself. What if a person knows the gospel but, fearing persecution, does not preach it and just says vaguely that believing only in the blood of the Cross brings the remission of sins? Such a person goes to hell. It is not my word; the Lord's word says so.

The Lord who is the Rock, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

What, then, is the theme of all these words? The Rock is the Lord Himself. Because stone is firm and withstands rain and wind well, He called the Lord the Rock. He speaks of the rock in the sense of firmness. The Lord said, *"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church"*

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(Matthew 16:18). He said this when Peter confessed in faith, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. Peter also said, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*. Peter knew exactly who Jesus was.

Peter knew exactly that Jesus received baptism from John and took over all the sins of us mankind, carried the sins of the world and died on the Cross, and rose from death to save us—that He is the Savior. So the Lord said He would build His church on the rock of that faith. The rock is faith itself. What is firm faith? It is the very faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

What is it that truly makes you and me sinless? It is that the Lord came to this earth and removed our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist, your sins and mine passed over to Him. Because the sins passed over, our hearts were washed from sin. Because Jesus took over our sins, He carried those sins of the world, was nailed to the Cross, and received all the judgment for sin. Thus He saved us. And He went to death, rose again in three days, ascended to heaven, and is the Savior who will come again. We must build our house on this Rock. We must enter by the narrow gate, the gate that leads to life.

Anyone can enter the narrow gate

Someone may ask why, then, there are not many who preach this gospel. But in fact there are many. Whether Koreans or the people of the whole world, if they only set their hearts on entering by the narrow gate, on obtaining life, it is entirely

possible. How is it possible? Over the years we have distributed many books. In our country too we have printed and distributed them beyond counting, and many must still be piled in the warehouse. Whoever reads those books can enter by the narrow gate and obtain the faith that builds the house on the rock.

People all over the world can do so as well. These books have gone into Israel, even into Iraq. The supply is not abundant, but one need only set his heart on seeking. This is the age of the Internet: search a few words like the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, or salvation, and our website appears. Seek, and it is found. He said, *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7)*. Since the Lord said He meets us and answers, it is truly sufficient. If a person only sets his heart on knowing which is the gate of life and what the true gospel is, he can build his house on the rock.

The narrow way is the way of life

He said the gate of life is narrow and its way is rough. Being narrow and rough, it holds much hardship. But it is still a way. It can certainly be walked. The wide way is not the only good way. The narrow way is also good. The way of life is narrow, but it is a way countless people can enter, standing in line. If people line up and enter for fifty years, a hundred years, thousands of years, truly many can enter.

Why, then, do people not enter by the narrow way? Why do they go only the broad way of destruction? Because they themselves want it. Why do even those who claim to believe in Jesus not walk the narrow way? We must know what these words from verse 13 to verse 27 are saying. These words are

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spoken precisely to the clergy and church members walking the broad way—that is, to oneself. Before we were born again, there were times when, reading the Scriptures, we could not read this passage. Because the Lord is speaking precisely to oneself. I was a false prophet; I was walking the broad way, claiming to cast out demons; and without being born again I was leading countless people to the broad way. So I used to skip this part and read elsewhere. But the Lord always speaks to us. The Lord is not One who destroys and judges us without ever teaching us.

At which gate are we standing now?

Now there are those who lead people to the narrow gate that leads to life. There are such guides, there are such churches, there are saints entering by the narrow gate, and there are workers serving so. On the other hand, on this earth there are also those who lead people to the wide gate; many have entered by the wide gate, and many workers lead people to it. Then where are you and I standing now? At which gate are we standing? Have we entered by the narrow gate and are we walking that rough way? Or have we entered by the wide gate, walking arm in arm with the people of the broad way, calling it good, on the way of destruction?

The answer to this is as follows. He said, *"unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. He said that unless one is born again, he cannot even see the kingdom of God. Everyone who does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is walking the broad way, and everyone who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is walking the narrow way. Which side we will take, we ourselves must choose. Before the word of God, that choice rests with us.

You must make a good choice. One choice decides the soul. You must make the right choice. Now the people of the whole world are walking the broad way. But there are also people all over the world walking the very narrow way. Among our coworkers, too, there are many who share the testimony of their salvation. There are those who, after being saved, keep walking the way of faith, and there are those who, after being saved, give up that way. The person who quits after being saved is walking the way of destruction. The person who walks the narrow way even after being saved—that person has entered the way of life.

Are you and I now walking the narrow way or the broad way? We are walking the narrow way. It is a truly fortunate thing. It is called the narrow way, but once you actually walk it, you find how wide it is. After receiving the remission of sins, walking the narrow way is entirely livable. It is rather wide. Within it there is much to do, much to enjoy, right works to do, and things to prepare. There is no end to what there is to do. Therefore we must not be foolish but become truly wise people. So the Lord said.

I will live crying out this gospel

I preach the gospel and pray that many people all over the world may enter by the narrow gate. Its being called narrow and rough does not mean it is too hard for a person to live in. Rather, it is better. Before I was born again, before I met the gospel of the water and the Spirit, before I read and understood this word of Scripture, I was no different from the dead. If I had remained as I was then, what would it have mattered that I studied theology and became a pastor? With sin in my own heart, telling people to receive the remission of sins, preaching in a church—

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what use would it have been? Since man has flesh, he wants, if possible, to minister in a good place, be treated well, and be comfortable. That is human weakness.

But how could one's heart be at ease while doing such a false ministry? It is a truly painful thing. It is better to quit and live honestly by working. That is far better than deceiving others. Even as a pastor, I could not teach the members the way their sins could be blotted out; I only told them to believe in the blood of the Cross. I too used to preach often that we need only believe in the blood of the Cross. But the people said sin still remained in their hearts. So I would ask how they could still have sin, and preach and teach the gospel again; yet though they said they believed, they still had sin. I myself had sin in my heart. It was not only me—everyone had sin in his heart.

Once I heard a minister boasting about himself. He said he held a great rally, gathered thousands, laid his hands on the sick and prayed, commanded Satan the devil to depart in the name of Jesus Christ and commanded the diseases to be healed, and several people rose up healed. He boasted that he had ministered that way and succeeded greatly. Listening to that boast, I suddenly felt nauseated. I had already resolved to quit such false ministry. And I made this resolution before God: though I had no money and nothing at all, I would preach only this gospel. I did not entice people with the offer of laying on of hands and collect money either.

Countless people are walking the broad way. With so many walking the broad way, we may say among ourselves that almost all who believe in Christianity are walking the broad way. Then should we cry out, or should we not? We ought to cry out. That is why we make documents like this and try to deliver them. Writing is truly difficult. Sermons repeat the same content again and again for emphasis. So in the preface of the book we write

in advance that this content is important and is repeated, asking the reader's understanding. We thank God for making us walk the narrow way, for setting us on the way of life, and for letting us serve this gospel. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Beware of the false ones

< Matthew 7:13-29 >

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' 'Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 'But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds

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blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.' And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Living in this last time, we go through truly many hardships. Many things inside and outside are heavy. I know the saints are weary, and the servants entrusted with the Lord's work are weary too. But this last time is also a precious season, not often given, in which a great harvest of the gospel can be reaped. In fact, this last time is the easiest time to preach the gospel. For all the words and all the prophecies of the Scriptures are being plainly revealed, just as written, in the reality of this world. Therefore, if we only deliver this word as it is, people cannot help but accept it. Now is the age in which it is plainly revealed that this word is the truth. So this last time is a truly good time to preach the gospel.

The passage we read today is Matthew chapter 7 verses 13 to 29. Here our Lord told us to enter by the narrow gate. He said that the gate that leads to destruction is wide and its way is broad, and many go in by it, but the gate that leads to life is narrow and its way is rough, and few find it. And He told us to beware of false prophets. He said that not everyone who says Lord, Lord enters the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of the Father in heaven. He also said that the one who built his house on the rock is the one who hears the word of God and does it as it is. When the judgment comes on the last day, the person who heard and believed the word will not be judged but will receive complete salvation before God and enter the kingdom of God. But the one who is not so, He said, will see his faith collapse on the last day. So let us consider together, with this

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word spoken to the whole world as our standard.

The narrow gate and the wide gate

First, in verse 13 the Lord told us to enter by the narrow gate. He said that the gate that leads to destruction is wide and its way is broad, and many go in by it, but the gate that leads to life is narrow and its way is rough, and few find it. Many enter by the broad way, but that way in the end reaches destruction.

In this world there are two ways: the way of life and the way of destruction. There are the narrow gate and the wide gate. The Lord told us to enter by the narrow way. The narrow way is the way of life. Those who enter by it will be very few, and because the way is rough, few will find it. But the gate that leads to destruction is large and wide, and many will go in by it. The Lord spoke this way to all the people of this world.

Who, then, within this Christianity, is the person really walking the narrow way, and who is the person walking the way of destruction? There are many who believe in Jesus. But among them, who is the one entering by the narrow gate, and who is the one going the broad way and entering the gate of destruction?

The broad way Jeroboam paved

The one who goes the broad way is the one who enters the way Jeroboam paved. Look at the word of 1 Kings chapter 12 in the Old Testament. Jeroboam was not originally of the royal family, but through God’s chastisement he became king of Israel. Rehoboam, the son of King Solomon, was originally the king of Israel. But Jeroboam sought to keep his own royal power.

Jeroboam feared that his people would return to King Rehoboam. He feared that the people would go back and abandon him. So he devised a scheme and made a false form of Christianity of his own. While claiming to serve Jehovah God, he set up a heretical faith.

Originally the people of Israel all went up to Jerusalem every year on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the Feast of Tabernacles, and offered sacrifices. Since the people of Israel were all kinsmen, when they gathered there they recognized one another. Jeroboam feared that if the people went up to Jerusalem once, they would abandon him and go over to King Rehoboam. So he made various things to keep the people from going over. First, he made two golden calves.

He said that these golden calves, not Jehovah God, were their gods. Second, he built temples in two regions, Bethel and Dan. Worship was originally to be offered in Jerusalem, the largest city in Israel. But Jeroboam built chapels at the two ends of the land where the people who had come over to him lived—from Bethel to Dan—and placed a golden calf in each.

Third, he changed the date. He moved the Feast of Tabernacles from the fifteenth day of the seventh month to the fifteenth day of the eighth month and had worship offered in those two places. And he made priests of ordinary people who were not sons of Levi. Originally the priests who served God had to be sons of Levi. In this way he kept the people from ever returning to King Rehoboam. And he taught them that these golden calves were the gods who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, and that these gods would bless them and make them prosper.

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The people who fell into heresy chasing signs and wonders

The people of Israel were originally a perverse people. Even before this happened, they served many foreign gods like Baal and Asherah. They ought to have believed and followed the word of God. Like Abraham, the father of faith, they ought to have believed and obeyed the word of God when they heard it. But rather than believing the word, they leaned heavily toward signs and wonders. The Scriptures say that Greeks seek after wisdom and Jews request a sign.

Every people pursues something different. The Greeks pursued wisdom, and so many philosophers came from that region. They put forth their own theories and ideas, debating before many and seeking verification. But the Jews chased miracles more than wisdom. They chased such signs and powers as the sea parting, fire coming down from heaven, and water springing up in the desert.

The person who claims to believe in God while chasing only signs and powers is in danger. The people of Israel did not believe because the Holy Spirit was in their hearts; they believed by watching the outwardly revealed works of God. For that reason they could easily fall into heresy. And so the whole people of Israel fell into the false religion Jeroboam made, the faith that served false gods.

The Lord’s word that many go the broad way is truly so. In this age too, the gate for entering the narrow way is very narrow and the way is rough, so those who find it are truly few. But the gate that leads to destruction is large and its way broad, and many go in by it.

The churches of today going the broad way

When people travel a long road, they choose, if possible, a wide and comfortable way. If a narrow, rough way and a wide, comfortable way lie side by side, everyone tries to take the wide way. No one insists on taking the narrow way. But you must know that for those who take the wide way, the end of that way is destruction. The gate that leads to destruction is large and its way is broad, and many go in by it.

How is it with those who believe in Jesus today? People like large and magnificent churches. If they sit where a pipe organ resounds and a choir of hundreds sings beautiful four-part harmony, they consider that holy worship. They will not go to a shabby place that others point at as heretical. Ordinary people go to the big chapels, the places people recognize. They do not care whether they are walking the way of destruction or will die and go to hell.

But those who truly seek the way of life enter by the narrow gate however rough the way is. They are the people who go forward according to the law God has appointed. They are the people who, lacking though they are, always believe that gospel and receive the remission of sins. These words the Lord spoke in verses 13 and 14 are words spoken precisely to the Christianity of today. They are also spoken to all the people of this world.

Confirm by the word whether it is a true church

There are truly many religions in this world. People say any religion is good. Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Mormonism—no one knows how many people follow such

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countless religions. They even serve as god what makes no sense at all. They call the sun, the moon, and the stars gods, and call mountains gods. But all these are only creatures God has made. How could the sun be a god? How could the moon be a god? How could a mountain be a god? Yet no one knows how many people serve as god what has no true doctrine at all. So many are those who go the broad way.

But those who go the way of life are few, for the gate is narrow and the way rough, and those who find it are very few. Therefore you must examine for yourselves whether you are attending the right church within Christianity today. You must confirm by the word, and search out, whether the church you now attend is truly a scriptural church or not. That a church is big, its chapel magnificent, and its history and tradition long is not everything.

They boast of history and tradition, but the history of Protestantism is not so long. It is not yet five hundred years since the Reformation was proclaimed. In the long dark age of the medieval period, one reformer arose and cried out: this must not go on; man is not justified by works but justified by believing with the heart. But until that reformation came, it took a thousand years for Christianity to escape from its captivity to Catholicism.

Some say that Catholicism is the elder house and root of Christianity. But how could that be right? They say the first pope was Peter. But who is above Peter? Jesus is. With whom was Jesus? He was with the twelve disciples. The greatest Elder of Christianity is Jesus Christ. Jesus raised up the disciples, and through that company the gospel spread to the whole world. How then can anyone say that Catholicism is the father and elder house of Christianity?

Therefore you must examine, in the church you attend,

whether its pastor preaches the word as the word. Do we not attend church to be saved, to receive the remission of sins, to become righteous and enter the kingdom of heaven? And to learn the word of God? Then we ought to learn the word.

Beware of pastors who do not preach the word of God

What happens if a pastor stands in the pulpit and does not preach the word of God but talks only of the world's ethics and morals? If he only repeats, let us be good people, let us not sin—is that true preaching? If a pastor talks philosophy, pedagogy, or economics, the people of the world know such things far better. The pastor must preach the word of God in that place. He must preach: receive the remission of sins; receive salvation. Jesus did not merely tell us to live virtuously; He told us to receive the remission of sins and receive salvation.

If you learn the word, you can tell. If you watch whether a man remains within the word—whether he stops when the word stops and advances when the word advances—you can discern whether he is a true shepherd or a hireling. Therefore you must discern and find out for yourselves whether you are now attending a church that leads to destruction or a church that leads to the way of life. If you do not even examine that and simply attend church, you are like the blind and will finally fall into destruction.

If you believe in Jesus and still have sin, what true faith is that? The Lord said that the gate that leads to life is narrow and its way is rough. However narrow, it is a way people can walk. Therefore we must seek out that way. Even if everyone else denies that way, if it is truly the way of life and the way to the

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kingdom of heaven, we must search for it to the end. The way of life that looks narrow to people is, when you come to know it, a truly wide way.

The narrow gate is the church that truly delivers the word of life. The church that delivers this blessed word of being born again of water and the Spirit is the church of the narrow gate. But the church of the wide gate is a church that drops people into destruction. It is a church that only tells people to give much money, a church that cannot solve even the one problem of the remission of sins.

We come to church because we are lacking and need the grace of God. We do not come to boast of power, honor, or riches. Nor do we come to show off our faces. However high a person's position in the world and however deep his learning, before God he is only a lacking sinner. Therefore before God we must humble our hearts and worship in lowliness. It is not right to stiffen one's neck and refuse to bow before the word of God. Nor may one, because his worldly position is high, presume to judge the word of God carelessly.

"Beware of false prophets"

Our Lord told us the way to discern true prophets from false prophets. In verse 15 He said, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."*

We must beware of false prophets. Who, then, is a false pastor? False is the opposite of true. A false pastor is a person who works in the office of pastor or evangelist without having received the remission of sins, without having been born again of water and the Spirit and become God's people. Such a person is the very false prophet. Such a person must be shunned.

There are those who have become pastors and yet say there is still sin in their hearts. There are those who say: I am a sinner; I have sin; I cannot help being a sinner until I die. Such people must be kept at a distance. The Scriptures tell us to reject a heretic after the first and second admonition. It says such a man is self-condemned and sins. The person who condemns himself as a sinner and still carries on ministry—he is the very false prophet.

By their fruits you will know them

Since He told us to beware of false prophets, we must be able to discern who the false prophets are. How, then, do we discern? The Lord said that by their fruits we will know them. He said that grapes cannot be gathered from thornbushes, nor figs from thistles.

False prophets come outwardly wearing sheep's clothing. They make their voices holy and say: let us live virtuously, let us not sin, let us live uprightly. But inside them is a ravenous wolf. The conclusion of this wolf is always money. Whatever sermon he preaches, this sermon or that, the conclusion is always money. Such a person is the very one who is false.

He said that by the fruit the tree is known. Every pastor puts the word of God on his lips. Therefore the mere fact that a man preaches the word cannot separate true from false. Only by the

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fruit can we know whether he is a true prophet or a false prophet. First, we must see whether that worker is a sinner or a righteous man before God. If he is still a sinner before God, he is a false prophet.

Second, we must see what he asks for daily. Whether born again or not, if he is a person who demands only money, he is a false prophet. False prophets are one hundred percent connected with money. We must believe and follow the word of God as the word. God spoke in Deuteronomy chapter 28: if we honor our parents and keep the Law, He gives such blessings. We must know the law of sowing. If we serve God well and hear His word well, God blesses such a person.

But the false prophet talks of the Law and always draws the conclusion toward money. Serve God well, give many offerings, give much and you will receive much, the one who gives much is the one with faith, he says. He attaches the conclusion of every word to money. We human beings are deceived by such words. But our Lord is never deceived. False prophets come in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. They do not give life; while pretending to lead people to believe in Jesus, they do the work of exploiting and killing people's souls.

The bad fruit a bad tree bears

Falsehood is a truly bad thing. These days falsehood is so common that people sometimes do not even know it is bad. But falsehood is truly bad. Even food benefits the body only if it is real food. However real it looks, an imitation cannot be eaten. Though the outward shape looks identical, food made of plastic kills you if you eat it. That is what falsehood is.

However fine in person the pastor of your church may be,

however good his voice, however much he loves you and treats you well, if he cannot deliver to you the gospel of the remission of sins and cannot lead you to be born again, he is a false hireling pastor. Such a person you must beware of. He is the very ravenous wolf. You must know that he is a wolf who exploits your money to build a great chapel and finally puts your soul and body into the unquenchable fire of brimstone. You can know by the fruit.

What bad fruit false prophets bear can be seen with the eyes. Some churches hang out free gifts and prizes to draw people. They give a refrigerator to the person who registers several new believers, and an air conditioner or a car to the one who brings more. So people drag in their friends and relatives by force. This is the very bad fruit.

Having gathered people that way, what do they do? They welcome the newcomers, hand out the gifts, and, calling it all-mobilization Sunday, serve food. They spend so much money on refrigerators, cars, and food. But they never do business at a loss. If even a few of those gathered remain in the church and give offerings all their lives, it turns a profit in the end. The false prophet thus makes people's souls a means of gain.

People say things like this: they told me to believe in Jesus, then told me to close my eyes, and stole my shoes; they said Jesus was good, then demanded only money. It is just money, money, money. They say the chapel is cramped, so let us build and offer a holy temple. Quoting Haggai, they post it as a slogan that God blesses the one who gives much to the building of the temple. Then they invite a revival speaker, stir the emotions hot, and assign how much a deacon must give, how much an elder, how much a lay member.

If a large chapel is really needed, it should be built. If truly many members gather, it should be built. That is not the wrong

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itself. But when they could simply divide the worship into several services, and instead pour their whole hearts into building a chapel only for money, that is the problem. They say that to serve the Lord well you must offer much money, and that to have good faith you must give much money. They even draw a graph on the wall showing who gave how much, and post it for display. So the person without money cannot even attend church. This is the very bad fruit.

The Lord said that a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. A grapevine, however lacking, does not bear thorn fruit; it bears grapes. There may be a difference between wild grapes and true grapes, but grapes are grapes. But a bad tree, even if it died and woke again, cannot bear good fruit. The moment such people open their mouths they ask for money, and they say it is all right to have sin, that praying in repentance settles it, that God overlooks it because you believe in Jesus.

About such falsehood and bad fruit, someone must speak rightly. As the inside of a tree is revealed when a woodpecker pecks it, the false are revealed as false only when someone points it out with the word of God. This is not hating and slandering a person. The word of God must be delivered as the word, and we must do good by faith. The Scriptures say that not believing is sin. Therefore, if a person hears this word and finds himself wrong, he ought to repent, not fly into a rage and lash out.

The meaning of the words that He removed our sins

These words are truly difficult for the person who is not born

again. The person who is not born again cannot understand a single word of them. The book of Romans says that God removed our sins. The people of the world understand the word blotted out like this: they think it means painting over something black to cover it, overlaying it with something else to hide it.

But spiritually, the word of God does not mean that. That He blotted out means that He removed sin itself. He did not cover and hide it; He made the sin that existed utterly cease to be. The world's concept and the concept of God's word differ like this. Therefore the person who has not received the remission of sins cannot understand this Scripture. Jesus took over all the sins of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and rose again in three days, utterly removing our sins. This is the very gospel of the water and the Spirit.

It is not that false prophets study little. On the contrary, they study much. Some sit shut in their study for days to prepare one sermon. But however much a person learns and prepares, if he has not received the remission of sins and is not born again, he cannot understand this word.

Not everyone who says Lord, Lord enters the kingdom of heaven

The Lord said that every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. And He said that not everyone who believes in Jesus enters the kingdom of heaven. The Lord spoke like this: *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).*

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One does not enter the kingdom of heaven by saying Lord, Lord. Only by believing in Jesus—knowing and believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and being born again—does one enter the kingdom of God. The Lord said so in John chapter 3. Who, then, is the one who does the will of the Father? The one who has been saved by believing the gospel by which Jesus Christ saved us with the water and the Spirit—the one who has become a child of God and become righteous—does the will of the Father.

The will of a father is done by his son. There is no such thing as another man's child doing another father's will. One's own father's will is done by his own son. The person saved by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ becomes a son of God. Having become a son, he upholds the will of the holy Father, who has no sin at all. The one who has received the remission of sins and become righteous does the will of his Father. What, then, is the Father's will? It is to receive this salvation, preach this gospel of salvation, and serve the gospel of God. This is the very will of the Father.

The judgment false prophets will receive on the last day

Now our Lord told what will become of these bad trees, these false prophets who bear bad fruit, on the last day. On that day, He said, when they are rejected before the Lord, they will protest instead. They say, *"Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" (Matthew 7:22).*

They recite their own merits. Did we not play the prophet for You; did we not teach people about Jesus and preach the word;

did we not cast out demons and heal the sick in Your name; did we not build the largest chapel in the world and send out countless missionaries? They protest: we did all this—how can You say You do not know me?

But the Lord declares to them plainly, *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23)* Who told you to appropriate My name and work? You have nothing to do with Me, He says. So on the last day, the trees that are not good and the false prophets who bear bad fruit, the false church members, the people who are not born again, all receive this judgment before the Lord. Their end is to enter the unquenchable fire.

Some people scoff, asking whether hell really exists. But God is everlasting and fills the whole universe. There is no place where the Lord is not. The Lord is almighty and everywhere, and there is nothing He cannot do. Look at the stars in the sky. Starlight hundreds of millions of light-years away is only now reaching our eyes, and no one knows how many stars have not yet come into our sight. Could the God who is so great fail to prepare one hell in which to judge sinners? Man must not try to measure God with his own narrow thoughts.

The house built on the rock and the house built on the sand

We must know what kind of person believes falsely. The Lord said, *"whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).* The one who hears the word and does it is the born-again person. The born-again person does the will of the Father. The born-again person is the one who believes the word

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and has built the house of faith on the rock. Therefore, though the rain descends, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat on that house, the house does not fall, for it is on the rock.

But the person who believes in Jesus without being born again is a person who has built his house on the sand—that is, on his own thoughts. So He said that on the final day of judgment its fall is great. However well built a house on the sand may be, when a flood comes and the water sweeps through once, the sand beneath is all washed away and the house collapses greatly. False prophets and heretics who lead people to the broad way without being born again must surely repent.

A good tree bears good fruit

A truly good tree bears good fruit. Because that tree is good at its root, it bears good fruit. It is like a tree planted by the rivers of water that brings forth its fruit in its season. It bears good fruit beneficial to people. However lacking it is, it bears that fruit. If the farmer gives it fertilizer and water, it surely bears good fruit. It does not bear because it wants to bear. When a person hears and believes the word of God, the fruit of righteousness is borne of itself.

The good tree is the righteous person, God's people who have received the remission of sins. The person who knows the work of God—such a person is the true prophet. Such a person is righteous. By the fruit the tree is known. While the whole world is in hardship and people are half dying, there are still those who seek only money and make a stir only over building chapels. But finishing a chapel does not make people fill it of themselves.

It would be better to use that money for the good work of

taking in and feeding and caring for those with nowhere to go. And above all, the gospel must be preached. We are people who live on this earth a short while and then go. We must deliver the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that people receive the remission of sins. So people must hear with their ears, understand with their heads, believe with their hearts unto righteousness, and confess with their mouths unto salvation. The one who delivers this gospel of truth that brings salvation by faith is the truly good tree.

Let us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in this last time

In this age we must preach this gospel. We must also teach who the heretics are. These days when we hand out tracts, people even call asking us to teach them what heresy is. It is all written there—what heresy is—yet those deceived by the false ones read it and still do not understand. It is all made plain: what heresy is scripturally, and how heretics act and teach in reality. We must distribute this well so that people come to understand.

We must teach what true heresy is and what is true, and deliver what the true gospel is. So whoever will believe may all come and receive salvation. To those who knock on and seek the rough way, the narrow way, the gate of life, we must deliver this way in full. And to those going to destruction, we must teach them that they are now going to destruction.

The Lord said, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall have the light of life. He also said, You are the light of the world. A person does not light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, so that all may see the light. Therefore the church of God must shine this light on high. So

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that all people may see this light, come, and obtain life, we must shine this light on the whole world. This is what we must do in this last time.

However hard and weary the world is, we must do this work steadily. The darker this world grows, the more, the more steadily, and with the greater faith we must preach the gospel. For there are that many more souls to rescue. Let us go forward still more steadily. Now let us pray together. God, let us preach this gospel. Let us preach it still more steadily. Let us all pray so. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

By the fruit you will know the tree

< Matthew 7:15-20 >

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them."

Beloved saints, it has truly been a long time. Did you sleep well last night? The nights are cold, so cover yourselves well and keep your bodies warm, and be careful not to catch cold. Our sisters especially, wrap up well when you sleep. We will spend today and tomorrow morning together, and we also plan to play the sports you enjoy. There are brothers who rise earlier than you and labor.

Brothers and sisters from many universities have gathered like this. Souls are rising up on every campus. When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to everyone we meet and teach them what sin is, God raises up souls. Our uniting with the church first is a great secret and a great power. When we first unite with the church, they also come to unite with us. Believe

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that God joins souls to us in this way, and act in faith. I believe that at the coming summer New Life Camp our Lord will gather all of us who are scattered together again.

Now let us enter the word and look together at Matthew chapter 7 from verse 15.

"Beware of false prophets"

Our Lord said, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15)*. And He continued, *"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:16).*

Our Lord told us to beware of the false ones, those who point to the truth falsely. He tells us to be careful of them and not to be like them. These false ones come wearing sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are like ravenous wolves. They are not people who come to give anything to the sheep. Rather, they come to kill the life of the sheep, to take material things from people, and to take away everything souls have. So said our Lord.

Who, then, are these false ones? They are those who minister, preach the gospel, and work in mission societies without having received the remission of sins themselves. They are those who preach a false gospel to others while they themselves have not received the remission of sins. The Lord said that by their fruits we will know them.

Are we ourselves not being deceived?

Now we must look into what kind of people these false ones

are. And we must look back at ourselves to see whether we ourselves are being deceived in anything. The false prophets are one matter, but we must examine whether even among us, who have come into the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, there is anyone truly deceived by his own self.

When we examine this, first of all, those deceived by themselves are those who think there is something good in their own flesh, in the human self.

The good tree and the bad tree: there is nothing good in our flesh

Our Lord said, *"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit" (Matthew 7:17)*. Here the good tree points to Jesus Christ, and the bad tree points to our flesh.

The person who has received the remission of sins bears good fruit. But the person who has not received the remission of sins, however kindly and virtuously he preaches the gospel, can only bear the fruit of sin—that is, make only sinners his disciples. Our Lord is speaking this fact to us who have received the remission of sins.

Our flesh, apart from the word of the Lord and the Spirit of the Lord, is only a bad tree. In us human beings, in the flesh of each one of you, there can never be anything good.

There is a place where brothers who have newly heard the gospel and received the remission of sins are most easily trapped: the place of thinking there is something good in their own flesh. If we hold entirely to the word of God, trust it entirely, and go forward in faith, fully receiving what the church and the Scriptures teach, we truly bear the fruit of righteousness. But if

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we do not do so and set our hopes on our own flesh, fundamentally pinning our hopes on our own heart and conscience, we are certain to be shut inside our own fence. We end up receiving the remission of sins and yet being locked up inside ourselves.

There is nothing good in the flesh of us human beings. It is because our Lord is good, because the Lord saved us, because the Lord removed all our sins, and because He poured the Spirit of the Lord into our hearts, that we bear holy fruit by the word and the Spirit. We must know this. It is by no means that there is something fundamentally good in man. In the flesh of man there is fundamentally nothing good.

The works of the flesh are evident

What, then, comes out of the flesh of man? The book of Galatians says this: what comes out of the flesh is such things as jealousy, pride, murder, revelries, heresies, and dissensions. There is nothing to hope for in what comes from the flesh. What comes out of the flesh is only one's own selfish desire. In the flesh of man there can be no true love.

Let us look together at Galatians chapter 5 from verse 19.

"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

The Apostle Paul says that the works of the flesh are evident—that is, plain. Even we who are born again, if we sink

into the flesh, find these same works of the flesh appearing in us.

We have received the remission of sins. But does our flesh not still like these things? Does it not still like fornication, uncleanness, and lewdness? It is not that the born-again do not have these. Even in the born-again, these lusts still remain in the flesh.

But within us are the Holy Spirit and the word of God. Because this word is the truth, because living by this word is right, and because this word rules us, we follow the word of God and are led by the Spirit, and so become instruments of righteousness. It is because the Spirit and the word are in us, because the Spirit of God dwells in us, that we become instruments of righteousness. If we were to follow the lust of the flesh, we could only fall into that uncleanness, fornication, lewdness, idolatry, hatred, sorcery, contention, jealousy, wrath, selfish ambition, dissension, and heresy shown in Galatians.

Jesus Christ is exalted in those who have nothing good in themselves

Such is our flesh. After receiving the remission of sins, a person can fall into his own goodness and think, even though the word does not say so, that he is originally a good person, that he is of good stock by nature. There are people who think the word applies only to certain special people and not to themselves.

Why is it that when you go to the campus you are shy about preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit and about going forward according to the word? Saying, I have received the remission of sins but I cannot preach to others, means you still think there is much human goodness left in you. It is because you think you have some goodness of your own that you cannot

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ask another person whether he is truly born again, whether the Holy Spirit is truly in him.

If you yourself are good, Jesus becomes low. But if you know that you are a filthy and ugly being, you are thankful that Jesus saved you, thankful that He removed all the sins of the world, and Jesus is exalted. When a person knows that he is evil and ugly and that Jesus saved him, Jesus Christ is exalted in him. He ascends the throne of the King of our hearts. It is in those who have nothing good in themselves that Jesus Christ is exalted.

In us human beings there is nothing good. Our Lord answered the question of a Pharisee by saying that there is only One who is good. The only good One is God. Apart from the Triune God there is no one good.

On this earth there are many who think and say that they themselves are good. What day is today? It is the day of Buddha's birth. Buddha claims that man is god and that man is originally good. The root is good, he says, but all the rubbish of the world comes in, and because man cannot drive it out, he fails to become god. It is the claim that man is originally good. And this very heart is also in the hearts of Christian believers who say they are born again.

Let us look back at our lives. How evil and ugly we are, how often we err, how often we fall into filthy thoughts, how often we sink into our circumstances—we experience that we are beings of flesh. If the word were entirely taken out of us, what would we be? It is because the word is in us that we are people of the Spirit; because we believe the word, He poured the Holy Spirit into our hearts according to His promise; and because He removed the sins of our hearts, we have become God's people and God's children.

Without the Lord we have no hope

If the Lord is not with us, we are people without hope. A brother wrote his experience into a poem and confessed: I went out on the world's road without the Lord and without hope, but the Lord Jesus died for me and saved me. Without the Lord we are beings who can never be saved, beings without worth. Without the Lord we can only go out on the world's road; we are beings who cannot follow God.

If the Lord had not removed all our sins, we could never have followed the Lord. But because the Lord saved each one of us, you and me, we follow the Lord. Because the Lord saved us, we have hope. Without the Lord we are like steamed bread without the filling, like an empty can—nothing at all. There is nothing to hope for in our flesh.

Therefore we must not push away from our hearts the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the fact that Jesus Christ removed our sins. We have become beings who cannot live without the Lord. Without the Lord, what hope do we have? We have none. We must not push away the love of God and the righteousness of God, the merit of Jesus Christ who blotted out all our sins.

Truly holding on to the righteousness of the Lord, holding on to the love of God and the righteousness of God, exalting and praising and testifying of that righteousness, looking to God, we must follow on. Where is true hope? It is in Jesus Christ. All our expectation is in Jesus Christ, and true righteousness and goodness are in Jesus Christ. In ourselves there is no hope. But the hope directed toward Jesus Christ is true.

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Considering oneself good is itself heresy

If we say there is anything good in us worth pinning our hopes on, that is heresy. Here in Galatians chapter 5 it says the works of those in the flesh are evident, and among them it speaks of dissensions and heresies. To divide from God is heresy. Thinking there is something good in oneself—saying no when God says there is nothing good in man, thinking differently from God—that is dividing from God, and that is heresy.

God says there is nothing good in man. That is why He says, I have come to save you. Yet people insist: no, there is at least some good in me. Those who think they have some goodness of their own are the very heretics. What differs from God's thought is heresy. Those who are not born again form parties and go their separate way from us, and yet call us heretics. But the Scriptures say plainly: saying that one's flesh has sin—saying one still has sin although Jesus took away all sins—that is the very heresy.

Therefore, the fact that there is nothing in our flesh to pin hope on is rather a good thing. Precisely because of it, Jesus is our true Savior, and following Jesus is good. If we had our own righteousness and goodness, we would surely give up while following Jesus. Saying, you have goodness but I also have goodness, so I can live virtuously well enough on my own, we would divide from the Lord and stop following Him.

But because there is nothing entirely good in us, and because only Jesus is entirely good and entirely righteous, we can only follow the Lord entirely—and we have come to be able to follow Him. This is a truly thankful thing. If after being born again we had something good and righteous of our own, we would give up following the Lord and surely divide from Him. We would think: now that the Lord has accomplished salvation, I can manage the rest on my own; I can live virtuously well enough

without You.

If we stop following the Lord, we surely fall into sin. Whether pastor or evangelist or staff worker or trained worker or any brother or sister, if any righteous person who has received the remission of sins stops following the Lord, he surely falls into the lusts of the flesh. He falls into filth and does filthy deeds all his life and then stands before the Lord. This is all too plain. Without the Lord we cannot do righteousness; following the Lord is itself our righteousness, and not following the Lord is itself our sin. We must know this clearly. In our flesh there is plainly nothing good.

We met our Lord in these young days. Having met the Lord, we are following Him. Therefore do not be bound to yourselves. In human goodness or human conscience there is nothing at all. Without the Lord we are people without hope. We must believe the Lord and follow on by faith. There is our hope. Keep this in mind.

The born again surely bear the fruit of righteousness

Now let us return to the words of Matthew chapter 7 verses 17 and 18.

"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."

This word means that the person born again before God, if he only stays attached to the church and grows by the word, bears good fruit of itself—the fruit of righteousness. If there is one unchanging truth between the born again and the not born again, it is that through the born-again person the fruit of

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righteousness is surely borne.

There are those who grow frustrated after being born again, wondering why the fruit of righteousness is not borne in them. Dwell in faith and dwell in the church. Then even while you stay still, the fruit of righteousness is borne of itself, and souls arise who receive the remission of sins through you. The fruit spoken of here means the salvation of souls. And it means the work of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit in union with the church.

Our Lord is not speaking of such good deeds as helping an elderly man along the road or carrying him on one's back. Of course such things also follow incidentally. If we try to do what the Spirit stirs in our hearts, we can obey freely. But the good fruit the good tree bears here is the good fruit the righteous bear—the fruit of the salvation of souls.

Does a pear grow on bamboo? Can a large pear grow on a thornbush? It cannot. We were originally thornbushes, but our Lord cut off our thornbush and grafted us into the true olive tree. Because of our sins, Jesus Christ carried our sins in our place and died, and grafted us into Himself. So although this flesh seems unchanged, because a new tree has been grafted into the root, the fruit of the righteousness of Jesus Christ is now borne in us, as persimmons grow on a persimmon tree.

As a good pear tree bears the fruit of pears, the born-again person bears the fruit of righteousness even if told not to—he surely bears it. Even if told not to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which declares we have no sin, he cannot help preaching it of himself. He preaches of himself, and souls hear that word and are truly born again. Earlier a brother told how he preached the gospel at his university. There must be many such brothers among us. When we preach the gospel, souls receive the remission of sins. Some cannot yet unite with the church;

some are young, or suffer much hindrance from Satan the devil. But plainly, after one is born again, when he delivers the word to a soul, the fruit of that soul's being born again is surely borne. As pears grow on a pear tree, the fruit of righteousness is surely borne in the righteous.

By the fruit you will know the tree

What of the bad fruit, then? A bad tree bears bad fruit. Here the bad tree points to man. A person who has not even received the remission of sins strives to bear good fruit, holds dawn prayer meetings, and labors in every way. But a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. How can a person who has not received the remission of sins make anyone righteous? How can he preach the gospel and make a righteous person? A person who has not received the remission of sins, though he dies and wakes again, cannot by preaching make even one person righteous.

How bad the bad tree is: though it is a thornbush, it thrashes about insisting it will bear the fruit of pears. The Lord, holding the sickle, wondering whether to cut it down, pities it and waits a little longer. But how could a bad tree bear good fruit? In telling us here to beware of false prophets and speaking of the true and the false, our Lord is telling us that there is nothing good in our flesh, and that those who point to the truth without being born again can never make anyone righteous. Without receiving the remission of sins, one can never make another person a righteous person like himself.

Our Lord spoke the way of discernment toward this world that Satan the devil has thrown into confusion between true and false. By what do we know? We can discern by the fruit. If we look only at the process, our holding dawn prayers and an

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unregenerate person holding dawn prayers, our preaching the word and their preaching the word, our evangelizing and their evangelizing all look much alike. But we have one way of discernment: by the fruit, without fail, the tree is known.

By the fruit we know who is genuine and who is fake, who is a true saint and who is not, who is a right guide and who is not. Our Lord has told us the method of distinguishing—the unchanging truth.

The standard for discerning true and false is the word and the Spirit

Beloved saints, we can take this part for granted and pass it by. We may think: it is obvious that a good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bears bad fruit—why did the Lord trouble to record this? But open your eyes wide and look at this world. See clearly how falsehood swaggers in this world, how false a world it is. Our Lord knew that such false ones would arise in great numbers, and He gave us the yardstick of the word of truth for measuring true and false.

We are not saying that we alone are right. We only hold things up to the yardstick of the word. Though they seem to preach the gospel just as we do, if a person has no sin in his heart and tells how his sins disappeared by this word, and truly has no sin in his heart, he is a tree of righteousness. But if someone speaks very close to the gospel and yet says he still has sin in his heart—that he is a righteous person who has sin—then they are thornbushes, thistles, bad trees.

"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:16) And He said, *"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down*

and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them" (Matthew 7:19–20). By the fruit the tree is known. That is, falsehood is discerned.

Now the true gospel has all but dried up worldwide. I am not speaking only of this narrow land of Korea. Small as this land is, all the currents of the whole world have come into it. Missionaries called evangelicals from all the nations of the world have come into our country. But when we meet them, it is truly hard to meet the true gospel. The whole world is like this now. Even those once thought to hold the gospel, when we actually meet them, leave us wondering how this could be.

There are great mission organizations known worldwide. It is said that those who preach the true gospel come from such great mission bodies. But when we meet the missionaries who come from them, though they speak very close to us, they are not without sin in their hearts as we are. It must be not in theory but in the heart that there is no sin; yet in conscience they cannot say there is no sin in their hearts.

Our Lord knew that falsehood would run rampant like this. Satan the devil has sown tares among the good seed. It is like planting good beans in a field, and the weeds beside them growing faster and covering the beans. Satan the devil has sown the tares of believing in Jesus while still having sin, and grows that force to cover the true gospel. We must discern this.

Discerning and judging are different. To refuse to discern even true from false, saying we must never criticize, and to call everything right unconditionally, is still more ignorant. Deuteronomy says that the deceiver and the one who follows the deceiver are alike in sin. Our Lord said that judgment falls alike on being deceived by the preacher of a false gospel and on following the deceiver. Being the deceived one is by no means innocence. We must discern true and false. In the world there are

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so many things so alike that they can hardly be told apart.

By what, then, do we distinguish? First by the word, and second by the heart. The person without the Holy Spirit in his heart cannot say he has no sin. Without the Spirit dwelling in him, no one can call the Lord his Lord, or say the Lord has blotted out all his sins. First Corinthians says that no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. The Lord called Lord here is my Lord who has removed all my sins. The confession that I have no sin because the Lord has removed all my sins—the person without the Holy Spirit cannot make it.

People without the Holy Spirit say that He took away original sin but could not remove personal sins, and that personal sins are remitted by repenting daily. This degrades the Lord into a Lord who took away only half our sins. But everyone in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells boldly confesses: the Lord is my Lord, and the Lord has taken away all my sins. Because the Holy Spirit is in us. The person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells overcomes the world and discerns truth from untruth. This is what the word means that no one can call the Lord Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

Merely calling Him Lord is not truly knowing the Lord. To confess Him as Lord is to confess that the Lord has removed all my sins, that He is my Savior, the Lord who delivered me from judgment. That Lord is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It is confessing that the Son of God, the King of kings, has removed all my sins.

We must settle this part clearly. The person who truly has no sin is a good tree and good fruit, and the person who has sin is a bad tree. When the person who has received the remission of sins preaches the gospel, souls receive the remission of sins, the fruit of righteousness is borne, and children of the righteous are born. But the person who has sin, however much he preaches the

gospel, still produces the fruit of sinners—he makes only sinners.

A sinner does not know that he is a sinner

How, then, do we distinguish the born again from the not born again? By the fruit the tree is known. First, there is fruit in ourselves: whether there is sin in our own hearts or not. If there is sin, that is not the fruit of God. God plainly came to save us and removed our sins. Therefore we have no sin. We are surely the fruit of God. Second, fruit is borne through us. When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit by which God saved us, the sins of souls plainly disappear. That is the very fruit.

When we meet and talk with certain people, there are those who still agonize over sin even after believing in Jesus. We must discern that they say they believe but have not yet become good trees and are people who cannot bear good fruit. We must discern such people and teach them. They say, on the contrary, that they are good fruit and good trees, that they are surely born again. But it is not so.

Does a madman say he is mad? A madman never says he is mad. I once met a certain sister. She seemed proper at first, but when her words were not acknowledged, her face suddenly twisted and she bore such venom that foam rose to her mouth. When people said that sister was possessed, she said she was not. But as I saw it, a legion of demons possessed her inside. When the word touched what was within, the thing inside was caught and raged and foamed. The mad do not say they are mad.

A patient in a mental hospital dragged a toothbrush around on a string. When the doctor asked why he dragged a toothbrush around, the patient answered that it was a toothbrush. When the doctor turned away, the patient said: that man thinks this is a

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toothbrush—it is a puppy—and counted the doctor a fool instead. He plainly regarded it as a puppy himself, but the doctor was so exasperating that he just answered it was a toothbrush. In the end the patient deceived the doctor.

The people of this world, those not born again, are like this. They think themselves righteous while still dragging sin around. Asked whether they have sin, they say they have sin; asked whether they are not then sinners, they say they are still righteous. Because they believe in Jesus, they say, they are counted righteous even with sin. But calling themselves righteous, they still drag sin around. As a madman does not say he is mad, sinners never say they are sinners. Rather, they say they are born again. But in fact they are not born again.

If there is sin in one's heart, he is a sinner; if there is no sin, he is righteous. If there is no sin, he is a good tree; if there is sin, a bad tree. By the fruit the tree is known. The person who has truly received the remission of sins through the Lord has no sin in his heart. It is not that he has no sin in theory; he has no sin in his heart. Through the accurate knowledge of the truth, when he was truly a sinner, Jesus Christ saved him, and his sin disappeared. That is why he says he is a righteous person without sin.

Let us dwell in the word and preach only the righteousness of God

Our Lord spoke this part. *"Beware of false prophets" (Matthew 7:15).* He is charging all God's people who preach the gospel to beware of false prophets, to be truly careful of the false ones.

There are times when, being kindhearted, we meet certain

people and simply approve them. But we must never approve carelessly. The false ones creep in carefully. The true and the false are bound to collide someday. Before the truth we must know clearly, discern, and preach the gospel. Our Lord told us to discern who is good fruit, who is a good tree and who is a bad tree, and to preach the gospel.

If someone says he believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, yet when we talk with him there is still sin in his heart, we must pray deeply for that soul. We must not treat such a soul carelessly, but pray, speak with him little by little, and pray again, untangling him. As a doctor cures a mental patient by giving attention over a long time, we too must give attention over a long time and make the bad trees into good trees.

Let us keep this part clearly in mind, remember that there is nothing good in our flesh, and truly dwell in the word, becoming brothers and sisters who preach and believe only the righteousness of God. I will close the word here. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Only he who does the will of the Father

< Matthew 7:15-27 >

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. 'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' 'Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 'But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.'"

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Amen. Our English sermons and Japanese sermons have this time been translated into Hebrew and published as a book. Now this gospel of the water and the Spirit has come to enter among the Jewish people, into the nation of Israel. This is probably the first sermon collection among the Christian books of this world to be translated into Hebrew. It is a truly thankful thing.

God said that only when the gospel is preached to the Jews in the last time will the Lord come again. So He caused the gospel to begin from Jerusalem, reach all Judea and Samaria and the end of the earth, and then enter Jerusalem again and enter the nation of Israel. When the people of Israel believe this gospel, then the time of the Lord's return arrives. It is a truly thankful thing.

Just as the seasons change without fail like this, this gospel of the water and the Spirit is also preached powerfully to the whole world. When the gospel enters even the Muslim world, North Korea, and the nation of Israel, where it has not yet gone in deeply, the day will surely come when the gospel is preached in all the earth. Today, centering on the words of Matthew chapter 7 verses 15 to 27, I would like us to think together about what God tells us to do.

The narrow gate and the wide gate

Just before this passage, in verse 13, the Lord said, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it."* And He continued, *"Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:14)*. It is the word that those who enter by the narrow gate are few, and the gate of destruction is wide.

Consider clearly how true the Lord's word is. Christianity

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today has become a truly broad way. Man has made Christianity into one religion, teaching that regardless of what God has said, if we only keep the worship rituals well, we all go to heaven. How many people, then, enter by that broad way? So many enter and fall into destruction.

Believing Christianity by entering the wide gate is truly easy. Who opposes anyone today for believing in Jesus? If a person believes in Jesus, lives virtuously, quits drinking and smoking, does not steal and does not defraud, the people of the world all like him. They like it because they suffer no loss. So it is a truly wide gate.

But the gate that leads to life is narrow and very rough. It is like a narrow path cut into a cliff. So those who seek it are few, and many people fail to discover the gate. Some come right up to the gate and turn back, saying it does not suit them. For they think there must be a grand order of worship, a splendid chapel, and a sacred painting of Jesus the Shepherd for a holy feeling to arise. Such people value ritual, so even when they come to a church that preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they simply go back.

Within worship ritual, it seems one's faults are covered and a holy feeling arises. But it is not so. Today this Christianity, Buddhism, and all the religions of the world are the wide gate, the gate that enters destruction. No one in the world says believing a religion is bad. Everyone says to believe. But when a person tries to have real faith, he is rather persecuted, hated, driven out, and suffers every disadvantage and threat.

"Beware of false prophets"

So the Lord speaks in verse 15: *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous*

wolves." This false prophet comes before people wearing sheep's clothing, but his heart within is like a ravenous wolf.

There are those who outwardly seem to live holy and good lives but in fact became religious leaders to draw money out of people. They rose to that place to eat well and live well. They do not even know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They only lodge themselves in worship ritual or in a denomination and devote themselves to collecting offerings from people. They say that giving much tithe is blessing and giving little is a curse, so the conclusion is, in the end, to give much money. That is why He said that inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

People have no ability to discern false prophets, so they think that anyone who kindly tells them to believe in Jesus is a truly excellent servant of God. Yet the people of the world sometimes see through the truth better. Once an employee of a company visited our church. Having seen a false pastor with a slick exterior, he asked our workers whether this one was really a pastor. For a true servant is not so smooth in outward appearance.

The false prophet is very smooth on the outside. He comes before people and speaks very smoothly, very kindly and sweetly. He puts forward his many good deeds, demands many good deeds of others, and tells them to serve much. But he does not tell them to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit; he only tells them to give much offering to the church. You may take it as certain that such a person is almost always a false prophet. Those who act so self-importantly within Christianity today—their conclusion is, in the end, money.

"By their fruits you will know them"

How, then, do we discern them? The Lord said, *"You will*

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know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:16) We cannot know by the outwardly revealed appearance alone. We must see that person's fruit.

What is that person's fruit? Whether he really understands the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and lives sacrificing and praying for the gospel of the water and the Spirit—this we must see. By this we can discern whether that person is truly a servant of God or not.

The false prophet always names God and names Jesus. He urges people to believe in Jesus and even praises them for believing well. But he does not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in the end tells them to give much money. That is the very false prophet. That is why the Lord, telling us to beware of false prophets, said that by their fruits we will know them.

The good tree and the bad tree

The Lord said, *"Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (Matthew 7:17–18).* Our Lord spoke truly plainly. Through this word we can discern whether a person is a true servant of God or not, a true saint or a false one. By what do we discern? By the fruit we know.

There is the person who understands the gospel of the water and the Spirit purely, lives for that gospel though lacking, and strives and works for that gospel. Such a person, whether alone or together with others, lives for the gospel and bears fruit beneficial to the gospel. But the bad tree cannot do so.

Therefore each of us must look back at himself. Am I a person who bears good fruit, or a person who bears bad fruit? We who come to church, worship, and hear the sermon all believe in Jesus. There is no one here who does not believe in Jesus. But am I really a person who bears good fruit—the fruit that saves the souls of others?

There is the person who does not seek the benefit of the gospel, does not care what becomes of the gospel or the church or the saints, and lives wishing only that his own flesh may prosper and be comfortable. Such a person cannot bear good fruit, so he must doubt his own salvation. The person who has really received the remission of sins, lacking though he is, gradually bears good fruit.

Why, then, does the Lord speak this word? Because many people will all believe in Jesus in days to come. They say they believe in Jesus, but by what is the difference revealed between the person who truly believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the person who does not? It is known by the fruit. By the fruit we can also know whether that person is truly born again or not. Of course, even the born again always have shortcomings. Still, he lives for the gospel. The person not born again fills his own greed while pretending to live for the gospel. That is the difference.

Today many believe in Jesus, and pastors, evangelists, workers, and church members are truly many. But no one knows how many live for the prospering of their own flesh. Even in the born-again church there can occasionally be a tree that is not good. But God keeps such a person within, to give him opportunity and lead him to turn. He shows mercy so that the person may admit in his heart that he is a sinner, believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart, and receive salvation.

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Among our pastors too there were those not born again. Some did not believe at all and left; others stayed long, not believing yet pretending to believe, lording it over people. They ruled and pressed down those under them unconditionally, and while pretending to serve the gospel, in the end they exploited. But the born-again worker cares for and shares with the brothers, sisters, and workers together. Though at times, under heavy stress, he drifts toward the flesh, the center of his root heart is not so, and he soon turns back.

He said that by the fruit the tree is known. The person not born again, whether he becomes a pastor or a worker, lives only for his own flesh and his own honor. He seems to live for the gospel, but in fact he does not. Therefore we must look back well at our own fruit. We must ask: do I really believe the Lord; am I for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or only for myself? The person without the Holy Spirit in his heart is not revealed at first, but later the result appears as living wholly for himself alone.

The person who does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not listen to the shepherd's voice. He will not believe this word, and instead tries to invent something new of his own. He does not believe the word he has heard and preach it by that faith; he makes up new things. Such a person is usually not born again.

"He who does the will of My Father in heaven"

Our Lord said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).* Who is the one who does the will of the Father? The one who believes the gospel of the

water and the Spirit and lives for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He is the very one who believes and lives according to the Father's will.

But there are people who do not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord said, *"Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'" (Matthew 7:22)* And He said, *"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:23).*

Who is the one who practiced lawlessness before the Lord? The person who said he believed in Jesus while not believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who claimed to believe in Jesus and yet did not believe that this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the real truth, the real salvation, the true gospel of salvation. He started religiously with merely believing in Jesus, believing only the blood of the Cross. Such a person does not receive the remission of sins. He supposes he is going to heaven, but in that person's heart sin still remains.

Many say they believe in Jesus but do not believe according to the Father's will. What is the Father's will? God sent His only Son to this earth, and that only Son washed away all our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. To believe that with the heart, receive the remission of sins, become God's children, run the race of faith, and inherit the Millennial Kingdom and the everlasting kingdom of God—that was the very will of the Father.

But what happens when people believe in Jesus without believing like this? *"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matthew 7:19).* We did not believe in Jesus in order to enter the fire. We believed in order to become good trees and live together in the paradise of earth.

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But because they did not start their faith on the foundation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—because they started merely with believing in Jesus, without the gospel of the water and the Spirit—they failed to become good trees. So in the end the owner chops down that tree with the axe and throws it into the fire.

Where does the cause lie? We must believe in Jesus as revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit; but they failed to do so and believed in Jesus unconditionally. They believed one-sidedly because they needed Him and wanted to prosper—not according to the Father's will. That is why they meet destruction. The person who has not received the remission of sins now, though he is inside the church, goes to hell if he keeps living like this. Therefore each must examine his faith once again. How am I believing?

The house built on the rock and the house built on the sand

In verse 24 the Lord said, *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock"*. Who is the one who hears these words of His and does them? The one who hears and does the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Such a person is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

What does this word mean? If we say we believe in Jesus, what fundamentally must become the foundation in our hearts? The faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be the foundation. At the very bottom must lie the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and on it faith and experience must be built up. But the person who

does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a bad tree.

We too once believed in Jesus without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We once believed knowing only that if we believe in Jesus as the Savior we receive the remission of sins. But the wise man who built on the rock refers to the person who, though he once believed without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, later heard and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that this faith became his fundamental base. We must build the house of salvation on the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and build the house of the pilgrim's faith that goes toward the heavenly city.

But what happens if the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not the foundation—if a person first lays down the old belief that believing in Jesus alone saves, and then adds the gospel of the water and the Spirit on top of it? He becomes a person without wisdom, a foolish person. On the other hand, the wise man who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and builds his house on it keeps his faith even when the floods come, when judgment comes upon the world, and when the deluge of sin rushes in, because he has already received the remission of sins and salvation. Lacking though he is, he becomes a person who lives for the Lord.

Such a person's fundamental root is laid firmly on the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So whether the world changes, whether he has shortcomings, whether there is outside pressure or not, he in the end bears good fruit as a good tree. Through whom does this happen? Through the strength Jesus Christ gives—through the water and the Spirit he comes to bear such good fruit.

But the Lord said, *"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built*

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his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall" (Matthew 7:26–27). When the rain pours down and the floods rush against the wall, the house built on the sand is holed through. When the wind blows on it besides, the whole house collapses outright. Its fall is great.

What does this say? True salvation—the gospel of the water and the Spirit—must be laid deep in one's heart, and on that foundation one must start the faith that believes God. One must start wholly so. Otherwise one meets destruction and cannot become a good tree. Though he strives to become a good tree, because he did not start from the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the result comes out bad.

The foundation of faith must be the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit

We believe in Jesus in order to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. It is to become God's people, to become people without sin, to become good trees, to obtain everlasting life, to become children of God and enter the kingdom of heaven. It is to take part in the Millennial Kingdom, the paradise of earth, not to be judged for sin, and not to go to hell that we believe. That is the purpose of believing in Jesus; there is no other purpose.

But the problem is that people believe in Jesus without believing according to the Father's will. They believe in Jesus, but they did not make the gospel of the water and the Spirit their foundation and start from there; they started merely from believing in Jesus without the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so they failed to become good trees. They too wanted to bear

fruit, but they could not.

The Lord gave us the gospel of the water and the Spirit and saved us from sin. He ordained that without the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, no one receives the remission of sins. So Jesus Himself drove in the nail, saying to Nicodemus in John chapter 3, *"unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).* Unless one is born again of water and the Spirit—that is, unless one receives the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit—he cannot become a child of God and cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Therefore, when we believe in Jesus, the foundation of that faith must be the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There we must receive the remission of sins, there meet the truth, and from there start. That is the start of faith. As Abraham left his homeland following the word of God, in our hearts too there must be a clear starting point and a clear finishing point. The person whose starting point is not clear suffers the difficulty of having to start again every day. Ten years after believing in Jesus, even a hundred years after, he must start again.

But the person who has clearly known and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of all sins by faith has already started, and so from then on he bears fruit. He learns faith and bears fruit, lives more and more a life walking with the Lord, and bears good fruit. The foolish man is the one who hears these words of His and does not do them. The Lord has given the gospel of the water and the Spirit—why do you not believe it?

Where is it written that one is saved by merely calling on the name of Jesus? The Scriptures say, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts*

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16:31). To believe in Jesus is also to believe in the name of Jesus. And the name Jesus means Savior. How that Savior came to this earth and saved us—that we must discover within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And we must believe it clearly. We must lay that faith as the foundation at the very bottom of the heart and start from there.

Before I met the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I believed in Jesus as the Savior for ten years. I believed that Jesus, who hung on the Cross and shed His precious blood, had remitted my sins. I studied theology and studied much in my own way. Others were satisfied if they got the exam answers right, but I was not. Before graduating from seminary, I studied thinking I must become a person able to explain the Scriptures wherever they were opened.

But what fruit was borne in me after believing in Jesus for ten years? My only thought was that if I had a good job, and if I had not made a vow before God in prayer, I would quit it all and return to being a layman. Why was that? Because there was sin in my heart. I had sin and the church members all had sin, and however much I cried out that we should live virtuously, help one another, and live kindly, those words were in the end words spoken to myself.

So I could not deceive my conscience. After preaching the word I could not come down from the pulpit and face the members. Because I was ashamed. When I stood conscientiously before God, I was truly a wretched man. So I prayed to God: God, You must meet me. I know nothing of the Scriptures.

From my seminary days, the thing I wondered about most in my heart was why Jesus received baptism. Everything else made sense, but that alone no one could explain accurately. Then one day, as I was reading down from Matthew chapter 3 verse 13, God opened my heart. As sin was passed over by the laying on

of hands in the Old Testament, I realized that Jesus, who came to this earth as the Lamb of God, bore all the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John.

As the words say, *"for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, with the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist He bore the sins of the world at that time, and my sins too were borne by Him at that time. The moment I read this word, a light was switched on brightly in my heart. Many people speak of something resembling the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But when you dig in and press them, they say this way of believing is also salvation and that way of believing is also salvation. That is not salvation. That is a bad tree.

Such people strive to say many spiritual-sounding things, but in fact there is nothing spiritual in them. To draw money out of church members they say this is right and that is also right. For both kinds of people must come in under them and give offerings. But the Scriptures say plainly: only the person who does the will of the Father, the person who hears and does these words of the Lord, receives salvation. Our Lord gave us the gospel of the water and the Spirit and saved you and me from sin.

Jesus Christ, who came by water, blood, and the Spirit

Man's fruit is filthy fruit. If the root stock is not good, however hard it tries to bear good fruit, it cannot. So the Scriptures say in Romans chapter 11 that our believing in Jesus is being grafted in. We were originally bad trees. But when we believed in our hearts in Jesus, who came by water and the Spirit, and Jesus Christ was grafted into our bad tree, though the flesh

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did not change, the heart became sinless, and we became people who bear the fruit of righteousness. We became people who serve the gospel of righteousness.

If we do not start from the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is not good seed. Therefore we must receive the good seed into our hearts and believe. Not by water only, nor by blood only, but we must believe in Jesus Christ who came by water, blood, and the Spirit. What does this mean? It means we must believe, as my Savior and yours, that Jesus is God and the Son of God, who came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sins of the world, was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood, and rose from death to become our Savior.

Why, while believing in Jesus, do people leave out the water? Is the water nothing? Even in this world, without water, everything would be so filthy that we could not live. However many animals there are, without water they cannot live a single day. All plants and animals live by the power of water. However good the land, without water it is finished. Only where there is water do all living things live and move and grow within it.

Therefore, if you would truly be saved from sin, you must believe in Jesus Christ who came by water and the Spirit. You must believe even now. You must believe at this very moment. All mankind must believe at this very moment. That Jesus Christ who came by water and the Spirit is drawing near as the Lord of the Second Coming.

This gospel is now preached to the whole world. Yesterday the Hebrew book came out; this week we pack the books and next week we send them out. The Jews will read this book and believe. They will cry out: the Messiah came by water, blood, and the Spirit; He put on human flesh and came to this earth, received baptism and bore all the sins of mankind, was nailed to

the Cross and received the judgment of those sins, rose from death and is alive even now, and has become our true Savior. They will cry out to the people of the whole world to believe.

You must believe at this very moment

You must believe now. Do not put it off. You must believe at this moment. However long you have led a life of faith—even thirty years—if it did not start from the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, you must now start from the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A start made not from the gospel of the water and the Spirit but from merely saying Jesus is my Savior, believing only the blood of the Cross, is all void.

The person whose faith did not start accurately from the beginning is a foolish person. For such a person judgment is coming, sin grows rampant, and as the years of his faith deepen, only sin bears fruit. However much he wants to bear good fruit, he cannot. In his own thought he may live kindly and well, but objectively seen, he has departed far from the gospel. Where does the cause lie? In not believing according to the Father's will. Because he did not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins there, and start from there.

Is the gospel of the water and the Spirit a mere doctrine? It is life. We were born sinners and could only go to hell. But if we believe this gospel we live, and if we do not believe we are swept away in the deluge of destruction and die. Life or death hangs on this. Though a man live seventy years, or by reason of strength eighty, the boast of those years is but labor and sorrow. Time keeps flowing. From birth, ten years, twenty, thirty, forty years rush by beyond control, and before we know it we reach

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the end and stand before the Judge.

Born sinners alike, with time flowing alike, there are many who have met the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Among them, all one has to do is believe. Believe without fail. You must know clearly that believing this gospel is the start of faith. You and I are here now, but in ten or twenty years many will not be in this place. Among those whose hair is turning gray now, many will not be in this world by then. Where, then, will they be?

The person who believes that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is his salvation and starts his faith from there and lives will enter the kingdom of heaven. But the person who lays what he formerly believed underneath and believes this only as an addition, saying it is also right, will be in hell. Since you believe in Jesus anyway, and believe in order to enter heaven, why believe foolishly? If you believe this gospel you receive the remission of sins, enter heaven, become a child of God, and become a person without sin—why, knowing that way, act so foolishly?

There are people who put it off, though they need only believe with the heart now, because what they formerly believed feels too precious to waste, or shameful, or like a loss. One need only believe now, in the present, with the heart; yet they think foolishly: if I believe now, does everything I believed before become void? Am I going in under the brothers and sisters? But God does not ask about the past. He asks: do you now, at present, believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit? He tells us to believe in the present.

The present is most important. Do not cling to what is past; believe that this alone is the truth. You must become a person with the faith that can go before the Lord at any time, even if the Lord comes today, at this very moment. Is there sin in your heart now, or not? You said you believe the gospel of the water and

the Spirit—then is there sin in your heart, or not?

People must believe this gospel—why do they not? The Lord said that if we only believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, salvation comes. If we only believe according to the Father's will we obtain salvation, and if we only do according to the Father's will we become wise people, and whatever world comes, whatever judgment comes, however rampant sin grows, we are not judged but obtain salvation and everlasting life. We must become wise people.

Lay a firm foundation of faith

We must become true prophets rather than false prophets, and true saints rather than false church members. Ritual is not what matters. Nor are the years of one's faith what matters. The faith that believes at this present hour matters. The heart that believes now matters. Lay down all the old things and believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit now, in the present, and believe clearly that you and I have received salvation and that faith starts from here.

The wise person is the one who believes like this. The wise person believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We preach that people should believe the gospel of the Scriptures accurately. The person who judges carelessly with one shallow piece of knowledge could not say such things if he knew the whole of the Scriptures fully.

The Lord has given us salvation. He came by water and the Spirit, removed our sins, made us God's children and God's people, made us follow God, and made us bear fruit in God. Therefore the foundation must be firm. The foundation must be laid well. In building a house, if only the foundation is solid, any

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house can be built. If the foundation is good, even if you tear down what you were building because it does not please you, you can build a good house again. But without a foundation, every house you build fails and collapses. The foundation of faith must be firm.

God tells all the people of the whole world to believe this gospel, and how thankful we are that He does so. We must give thanks that He still gives opportunity, and for that grace by which He tells all the people of the whole world to believe. This is the word He speaks to you, and the word He speaks to me as well. I believe. Do you believe? I will preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit without fail until the day the Lord comes.

Even when I am martyred in days to come, I will preach this gospel without fail even to the one who kills me: the sins you committed in this world, even the sin of killing me, Jesus bore them all with the baptism He received from John at thirty years of age when He came to this earth. And carrying those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood. Jesus has become your Savior. Believe without fail. So I will preach.

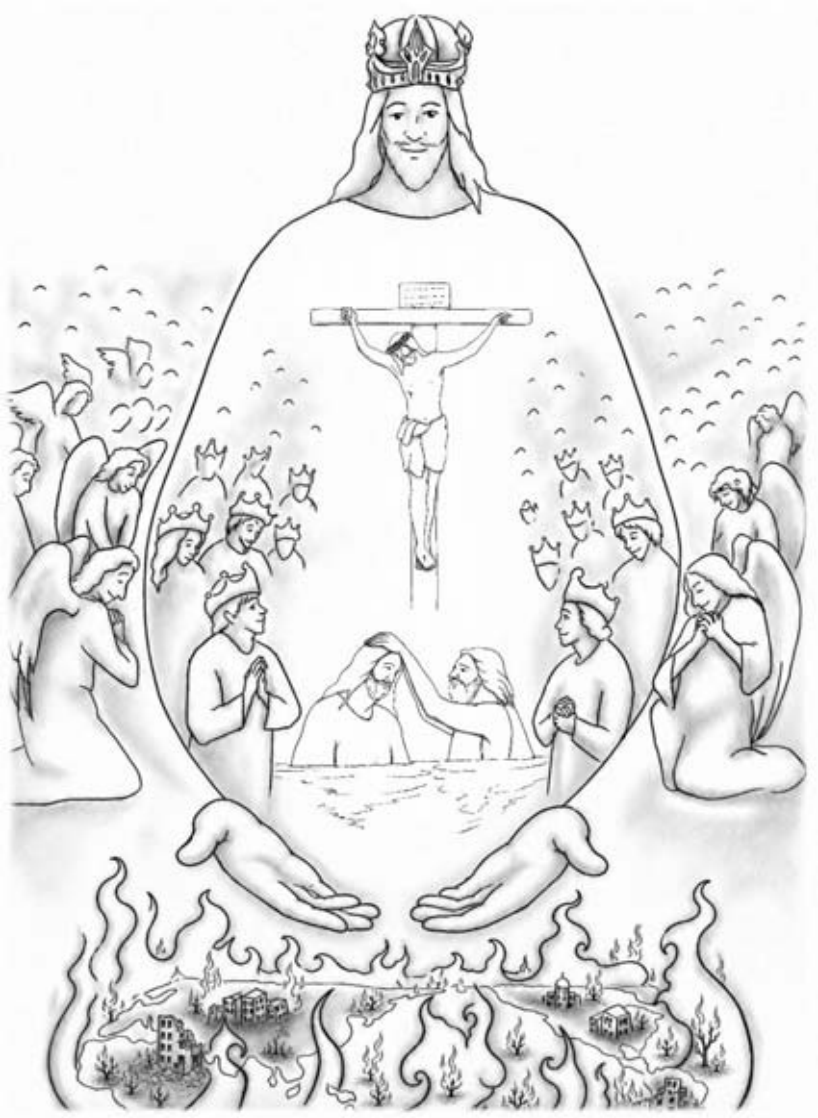
We must preach this gospel to the whole world. Autumn has come, and we will work hard again. We will lay the foundation firm and work. The person who says he believes in Jesus but starts without making the gospel of the water and the Spirit the clear foundation of his faith ends up a false prophet. Therefore we must lay the ground of faith firm. Holding the firm ground of faith by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must live by that faith. Then good fruit is borne gradually and beautifully through your lifetime. God surely helps in due season. To make us bear good fruit He has given such blessing to God's children, to us. We give thanks. I will close the word. ✉

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CHAPTER

8

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Matthew Chapter 8

< Matthew 8:1-34 >

“When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, ‘See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, ‘Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘I will come and heal him.’ The centurion answered and said, ‘Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.’ When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ Then Jesus said to the centurion, ‘Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.’ And his servant was healed that same

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hour. Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them. When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.' And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then another of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.' Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!' But He said to them, 'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?' Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, 'Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?' When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, 'What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?' Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the

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demons begged Him, saying, 'If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.' And He said to them, 'Go.' So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region."

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 8 is the chapter in which Jesus, having finished the Sermon on the Mount and come down from the mountain, reveals in His actual ministry the authority with which He taught in words. Jesus cleanses a leper, heals the servant of a Gentile centurion, and restores Peter's mother-in-law and a great number of the sick. He also teaches the sacrifice and the priorities that come with following Him, calms the wind and the sea, and casts out the demons from the demon-possessed men in the region of Gergesenes.

In this chapter the authority of Jesus works across the boundaries of disease, distance, and nation. He touches the leper with His hand and makes him clean, and to the centurion's servant far away He grants healing by His word alone. The tempest of nature grows calm at Jesus' command, and even the demons recognize Him as the Son of God and obey His order. Yet not everyone who witnessed the authority of Jesus believed in Him. The centurion was praised for believing the authority of His word, but the people of the

region of Gergesenes set their hearts on the lost herd of swine and on their fear rather than on the restored souls, and begged Jesus to leave.

1. Jesus, who cleansed the leper (verses 1–4)

When Jesus came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him, and a leper came, worshiped Him, and confessed, *"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean" (Matthew 8:2)*. He believed that Jesus had the power to make him clean, yet he did not push his own demand first but entrusted himself to the Lord's will.

In those days a leper had to suffer not only the pain of the disease but also the pain of being isolated from the community. People avoided contact with him, but Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him directly. He did not turn away from the man regarded as unclean, and when He said, *"I am willing; be cleansed" (Matthew 8:3)*, the leprosy was immediately cleansed.

This event shows the compassion and the authority of Jesus at the same time. Jesus touched an unclean man yet did not become unclean; rather, He made that man clean. Only, we must not conclude that physical disease is the result of some particular sin an individual has committed. What the passage stresses is the power and mercy of Jesus, who restores even the man who could not be cured and had been cast out.

Jesus told him to tell no one, but to show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded as a testimony. This was a measure to have his cleansing officially confirmed according to the procedure of the Law of that time, so that he could return to the community. Jesus did not let him parade the miracle, but had him follow the testimony and order the Law required.

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2. The centurion's faith and the healing of his servant (verses 5–13)

When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came and pleaded that his servant was lying at home paralyzed and dreadfully tormented. The centurion was a Gentile and a man of authority, yet he did not turn away from his sick servant but came to Jesus for him.

When Jesus said He would come and heal him, the centurion answered that he was not worthy to receive Jesus in his house: *"But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed" (Matthew 8:8)*. Taking the military chain of command as his example, he believed that just as soldiers and servants obey when he commands, so the word of Jesus has the authority that rules over disease.

The centurion did not think that Jesus could heal only by going to the servant's side or laying His hand on him. He acknowledged the authority of Jesus, which is not limited by distance or circumstances. Jesus heard his words, marveled, and praised him, saying that He had not found such great faith even in Israel.

Jesus warned that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. This shows that no one enters the kingdom of heaven by lineage or religious background alone. Even a person with the outward status of the covenant people is excluded if he has no faith, while even a Gentile takes part in the kingdom of God by faith.

When Jesus said to the centurion, *"Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you" (Matthew 8:13)*, the servant was healed at that very hour. This event shows that the word of Jesus works beyond space, and that true faith is

trusting the Lord's authority and word more than visible conditions.

3. Healing Peter's mother-in-law and many sick people (verses 14–17)

When Jesus entered Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever. When Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her, and the woman arose and served Him.

Her recovery was immediate and complete. It was not merely that her fever went down; she regained strength enough to rise at once and serve. Her rising and serving Jesus shows the natural response of a person who has received grace and serves out of gratitude for that grace.

When evening came, people brought many who were demon-possessed, and Jesus cast out the spirits with His word and healed all who were sick. Matthew connects this with the prophecy of Isaiah, explaining that the word *"He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:17)* was fulfilled.

Jesus is not One who watched suffering people from a distance; He came to take their weakness and pain on Himself. These healings show that Jesus is the promised Savior, and that the kingdom of God, which restores those who suffer under the power of sin, disease, and demons, is coming through Him.

4. The cost and priority of following Jesus (verses 18–22)

When Jesus commanded them to depart to the other side, a scribe came and said he would follow Him wherever He went. But Jesus answered, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20)*.

Rather than praising the scribe's enthusiasm at once, Jesus

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made him consider the cost that comes with following Him. To follow Jesus is not a way that guarantees a comfortable life, security, and human recognition. Jesus Himself lived without a fixed dwelling in order to accomplish the will of God. Therefore a disciple should not say he will follow out of momentary emotion alone, but must be ready to follow the Lord whatever hardship comes.

Another disciple asked to be allowed first to go and bury his father. To this Jesus said, *"Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:22)*. These words must not be used as a general command to disregard a parent's funeral or one's responsibility to family. Jesus was strongly showing that the Lord's call must come before every reason a disciple puts forward as *"first."*

The heart of discipleship lies in not placing Jesus as merely one option among the many choices of life. Property, security, family, and social duty are important, but they must not become reasons for continually postponing or refusing the Lord's call.

5. Jesus, who calmed the tempest (verses 23–27)

When Jesus got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. Then a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the waves covered the boat, and Jesus was asleep. The fact that the tempest struck even the disciples who had boarded the boat following Jesus shows that following the Lord is not a promise that life will hold no hardship at all.

Among the disciples were fishermen familiar with the Sea of Galilee, but before this tempest they could not solve the problem with their own experience and ability. They woke Jesus, crying out, *"Lord, save us! We are perishing!" (Matthew 8:25).*

Jesus first said, *"Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 8:26)* and then rebuked the winds and the sea. And there was a great calm. Though Jesus was with them in the boat, the disciples looked only at the tempest before their eyes and were sure of death. Jesus pointed out not the existence of the tempest but their little faith, which was ruled by fear even while He was with them.

When the winds and the sea obeyed Jesus' command at once, the men marveled, saying, *"Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matthew 8:27)* This event shows that Jesus is not a mere teacher or healer but the One who has the authority that rules even nature.

Faith is not thinking that a tempest will never arise. It is trusting that even in the tempest Jesus is with us and is the One who rules the winds and the sea. Even at the moment when human ability ends, the authority of Jesus is not limited.

6. Saving the demon-possessed men of the region of Gadara (verses 28–32)

When Jesus arrived across the sea in the region of Gadara, two demon-possessed men came out from among the tombs. They were so exceedingly fierce that no one could pass that way. Beyond human control, cut off from the community, they were living among the tombs, the place of death.

When the demons saw Jesus, they cried out, *"What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29)* The demons knew who Jesus was and that there was an appointed time of final judgment for them. But merely knowing who Jesus is does not mean having true faith. The demons knew Jesus, yet they had no intention of loving or obeying Him.

The demons begged that, if they were to be cast out, they be

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permitted to enter the herd of swine. When Jesus said, *"Go,"* the demons came out of the men and entered the swine, and the whole herd ran down the steep place into the sea and perished.

This event shows that demons cannot defy the permission and command of Jesus. It also reveals that the evil power which had made the men fierce and kept them among the tombs ultimately heads toward destruction and death. Jesus subdued with His word even the power of the demons, which human strength could not suppress.

7. The Gadara people who asked Jesus to leave (verses 33–34)

Those who kept the swine ran into the city and reported what had happened to the demon-possessed men and to the herd. Then the whole city came out to meet Jesus, but instead of welcoming Him or asking Him to stay longer, they begged Him to leave their region.

They saw the power of the demons that had tormented people broken and two men set free. But at the same time they saw the economic loss of many swine and felt fear before an authority they could not understand. In the end, rather than asking Jesus to do more works, they wanted Him to leave.

This shows that not everyone believes because they have seen a miracle. The centurion believed His word even before Jesus came to his house, but the people of Gadara did not receive Jesus even after seeing the amazing event with their own eyes. Faith does not arise merely from seeing miracles; it lies in knowing who Jesus is and receiving His authority and His word.

The choice of the Gadara people shows the human tendency to count property and familiar life more important than the restoration of a soul. People can also keep Jesus at a distance

for fear that His presence will change their lives and values. True faith does not ask Jesus to leave; it asks Him to stay in one's life and reign.

The core meaning of Matthew chapter 8

First, Jesus, who spoke with authority in the Sermon on the Mount, also revealed the actual authority that rules disease, nature, and demons.

Second, by stretching out His hand and touching the unclean and outcast leper, Jesus showed that no one is excluded from His compassion.

Third, the centurion's faith was a faith that trusted the word and authority of Jesus more than visible conditions.

Fourth, the standard for taking part in the kingdom of heaven is not lineage or religious background but faith in Jesus.

Fifth, Jesus came as the Savior who does not turn away from human weakness and disease but takes them on Himself.

Sixth, sacrifice can accompany the way of following Jesus, and a disciple must put the Lord's call before all other things.

Seventh, the tempest can strike even those who are with Jesus, but Jesus is greater than the tempest and rules even the winds and the sea.

Eighth, even the demons knew and obeyed the divine authority of Jesus; the power of evil spirits destroys people, but Jesus sets people free from that power.

Ninth, the mere fact of having seen a miracle does not produce faith; a person may receive the authority of Jesus, or may reject Him to protect his own interests.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 8 is the chapter in which Jesus receives the pleas of the outcast and of the Gentile and rules disease, nature, and demons with His word, revealing Himself as the Savior who has both authority

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and compassion, while showing that the true faith that follows Him requires trust in His word and the resolve to change the priorities of one's life.

2) Matthew chapter 8 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Matthew chapter 8 shows what authority the words Jesus proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount actually carry. Jesus cleansed the leper, healed the centurion's servant with His word, and restored the sick and the demon-possessed. By rebuking the winds and the sea into calm and casting out the demons of the region of Gadara, He revealed Himself as the Son of God who rules the powers of disease, nature, and Satan.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the healings of this chapter do not mean physical recovery alone. Just as the leper could not become clean by his own strength, a sinner cannot wash away the sins of his heart with his own good deeds or prayers of repentance. The power that makes sinners clean belongs to Jesus. Jesus took on all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again, completely saving sinners.

Matthew chapter 8 also shows the fact that this salvation is received not by a person's lineage, religious career, or fleshly merit but by the faith that believes the word. The Gentile centurion was praised for believing that his servant would be healed by Jesus' word alone, but the people of Gadara, though they saw the authority of Jesus directly, asked Him to leave. What matters is not whether one has seen a miracle but whether one believes, according to the word, who Jesus is and

what salvation He has fulfilled.

1. The leper who could not become clean by his own strength (verses 1–2)

"And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.'" (Matthew 8:2).

The leper knew his own condition. He could not cure or cleanse his disease by himself, and he was treated as unclean, isolated from the community. Without relying on his own ability, he came to Jesus and confessed that if the Lord was willing, He could make him clean.

In the Scriptures leprosy is often applied as a picture explaining the spiritual state of the sinner. Sin keeps appearing from a person's heart, severs his relationship with God, and finally leads him to destruction. However much a person resolves to live virtuously and keeps a religious life, he cannot completely remove the sin that comes out of his own heart.

Yet we must not conclude that every physical disease is the result of some particular sin that person has committed. The important spiritual application here is that only Jesus can make clean the problem of sin, which, like leprosy, no one can solve by himself.

The leper did not say, "If I try hard, I can become clean." He acknowledged that becoming clean depended entirely on the Lord's power and will. The remission of sins is the same. A person must lay down his own righteousness and receive by faith the salvation the Lord has completed.

2. *"I am willing; be cleansed"* (verse 3).

"Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed"

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(Matthew 8:3).

People feared contact with the leper, but Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him. It was not Jesus who became unclean; it was the leper who became clean. This shows the love of God, who does not keep sinners at a distance but comes to them Himself and makes them clean.

When the leper confessed, *"if You are willing,"* Jesus answered, *"I am willing."* The work of saving sinners did not begin from a human plan but from the will of God. God does not delight in the destruction of sinners; He wanted to save them from sin and make them His own people.

To accomplish that will, Jesus took on the sins of all people through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And carrying those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, paying the price of sin in full, and rose again. Just as the leper was immediately cleansed by the word of Jesus, the sinner also is washed of all the sins of his heart when he believes this gospel.

The remission of sins is not a process of becoming clean little by little over a lifetime. Because Jesus has already taken on and been judged for all the sins of the world, the person who believes that fact receives the remission of sins once and for all. Even after being saved, the weakness and shortcomings of the flesh may appear, but the sins Christ bore do not come to remain in a person's heart again.

3. Having him show himself to the priest and offer the gift (verse 4)

Jesus told the cleansed man to show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded as a testimony. This was to have him officially confirmed as clean according to the procedure of the Law and returned to the community.

The purification rites and sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed to the salvation of Jesus Christ who was to come. The principle of the sacrifice—sin passing to the offering and the offering dying, shedding its blood—was completed in Jesus. Jesus took over sin through the baptism He received from John and received the punishment of that sin on the Cross, fulfilling the salvation the Old Testament sacrificial system had pointed to.

The cleansed man could not claim that he had cured his own disease. In the same way, the person who has received the remission of sins cannot boast of his own good deeds, repentance, and devotion. He must testify of the righteousness of God—that Jesus took on and removed all his sins.

In the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit there is the testimony of the word. He does not call himself righteous because his feelings or his life are perfect; he believes and confesses that he has received the remission of sins because of the word that Jesus took on all his sins.

4. The faith of the centurion who said, *"But only speak a word"* (verses 5–13).

The centurion was a Gentile army officer, yet he came to Jesus carrying his servant's suffering. When Jesus said He would go and heal him, he said he was not worthy to receive the Lord in his house and asked Him only to speak the word.

"The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed" (Matthew 8:8).

The centurion knew how commands were carried out in the army. Just as his soldiers went when he said go and came when he said come, he believed that even disease could only obey the

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word of Jesus. He did not think Jesus had to be at the servant's side in person to heal him.

Saving faith is likewise the faith that receives the word of God as it is. It is not that sins are washed away only when there is a special feeling or a mystical experience. If Jesus said that He took on our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, then our sins passed over to Him; and if He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, then the price of sin has been paid in full.

Jesus said He had not found such great faith even in Israel. Being a physical descendant of Abraham and having led a long religious life does not save a person. Conversely, even a Gentile who believes the word of God as it is can sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

The warning that *"the sons of the kingdom"* will be cast out into outer darkness means that religious status must not be counted as the guarantee of salvation. Even a person who has long attended church and held offices cannot enter the kingdom of heaven if sin remains in his heart and he does not believe the righteousness God has fulfilled. The one who enters the kingdom of heaven is the one who believes not his own righteousness but the written word of salvation.

When the word *"Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you" (Matthew 8:13)* was proclaimed, the servant was healed at that hour. The centurion's faith was not confidence in his own ability but trust in the word of Jesus.

5. Peter's mother-in-law, who arose and served after being healed (verses 14–15)

When Jesus entered Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever. When Jesus touched her hand, the fever left, and she rose at once and served Him.

There is the same order in salvation and service. A person is not saved by serving zealously first; he is saved from sin and weakness by the Lord's grace, and afterward serves the Lord with thanksgiving. Service is not the price of salvation but the fruit borne by the saved.

Even the person who has received the remission of sins can stumble in the weakness of the flesh or waver in faith. But he must not keep lying down, looking only at his own weakness. He must believe the word that the Lord has raised him up, and rise to a life of serving the church, the gospel, and other souls.

6. The Savior who took our infirmities (verses 16–17)

"When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses'" (Matthew 8:16–17).

Jesus did not merely watch human weakness and pain from afar. He came to take them on and bear them Himself. The healings of physical disease reveal that Jesus is the promised Christ and the One who saves those suffering under the power of sin, death, and Satan.

The baptism Jesus received from John was the beginning of the saving work of bearing on Himself the sins and infirmities of mankind. He carried the sins He had thus taken on to the Cross, was judged shedding His blood, and overcame sin and death by rising again. Therefore the healing of Jesus does not stop at the blessing of living long and healthy in this world; it points to the salvation by which a sinner receives the remission of sins and obtains everlasting life.

Believing this word does not mean that every physical disease is always healed at once in this world. Even the person

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who has received the remission of sins can fall sick and die physically. But because Christ took on the power of sin and death, at the last the resurrection and everlasting life are guaranteed.

7. The cost of following Jesus (verses 18–22)

When a scribe said he would follow Jesus wherever He went, Jesus said the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. These words make us abandon the idea that if we follow Jesus we will always live in peace and plenty in this world. Loss, suffering, and loneliness can accompany the way of following the Lord.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a means of guaranteeing worldly success. The purpose for which Jesus saved us with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the Cross is not to let us fulfill our worldly desires more greatly. The person who has received the remission of sins is called to use his time, material things, and talents for the kingdom of God and the salvation of souls.

The words *"Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:22)* do not mean abandoning every responsibility toward parents and family. They mean that no work of the world that keeps postponing the Lord's call can be put before the gospel.

Even if the flesh is alive, a person who has not received the remission of sins is spiritually dead. The saved have the responsibility of delivering the word of life to those who have not yet heard the gospel. Following the Lord does not stop at attending church; it is changing the priorities of one's life for the gospel.

8. Jesus, who is with us in the tempest (verses 23–27)

A great tempest struck even the disciples who had boarded the boat following Jesus. This shows that being saved does not mean that no hardship will arise. Disease, economic difficulty, persecution, and trials of the heart can come even to those who believe the gospel and follow the Lord.

When the disciples could no longer solve the tempest with their experience and ability, they cried out, *"Lord, save us! We are perishing!" (Matthew 8:25)* Jesus did not abandon them but rebuked the winds and the sea into a great calm.

When Jesus said, *"Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" (Matthew 8:26)*, He was not saying that the danger did not exist. He was rebuking them for failing to believe that the Lord, greater than the tempest, was in the same boat, and for being ruled by the visible circumstances.

The peace of the saved does not come from circumstances free of problems. It comes from the unchanging fact that Jesus took on our sins through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of sin in full on the Cross, and rose again. Since the Lord who solved the greatest tempest of all—sin and death—is with us, the believer does not doubt his salvation even in the tempests of life but boldly asks the Lord for help.

That the winds and the sea obeyed the word of Jesus shows that He is not a mere prophet but God, who created and rules all things. The One who saved us is not a weak human being but the Son of God, who rules even nature and death.

9. The Son of God whom even the demons recognized (verses 28–32)

The demon-possessed men of the region of Gadara lived among the tombs and were so fierce that no one could pass that way. This shows how the power of Satan drives people into

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death, isolation, and destruction. Even that power, which human strength and institutions could not control, submitted before Jesus.

The demons called Jesus *"You Son of God"* and knew that there was an appointed time of judgment for them. But no one is saved merely by knowledge of Jesus' identity. Even the demons knew Jesus, yet they did not believe His salvation or obey Him.

True faith does not end with acknowledging with the lips that Jesus is the Son of God. It is believing with the heart the fact that Jesus took on my sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again.

The demons could not even enter the herd of swine without Jesus' permission. When Jesus said, *"Go,"* the demons entered the swine, and the whole herd rushed into the sea and perished. This shows that the power of Satan is not an independent and unlimited power but stands under the command of Jesus, and that its final result is destruction and death.

Sin is the ground on which Satan condemns a person before God. But Jesus took on sin and was judged for it, removing the ground of that condemnation. The person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer a slave of sin and Satan but lives as a child of God.

10. The Gadara people who chose the swine over souls (verses 33–34)

The people of Gadara heard both of the deliverance of the demon-possessed men and of the death of the herd of swine. But they did not thank Jesus or ask to be saved themselves; they begged Him to leave their region.

They saw the material loss represented by the herd of swine

as greater than the restoration of two souls. They may also have feared that receiving Jesus would change their lives and values. To them, possessions and familiar life mattered more than the salvation of souls.

Today as well, a person hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit can reject it for fear of losing his self-righteousness, religious tradition, and worldly gain. To accept the word that Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John, one must lay down the self-righteousness that thinks one can become righteous by good deeds and prayers of repentance.

The people of Gadara saw the authority of Jesus directly yet asked Him to leave, while the centurion believed that His word alone was enough before seeing any miracle. This contrast shows that true faith lies not in the miracle before one's eyes but in receiving the word of God. Before the gospel each person must choose whether to ask Jesus to leave in order to keep what is his, or to abandon his own righteousness and receive salvation.

The core meaning of Matthew chapter 8

First, just as the leper could not become clean by himself, the sinner cannot wash away the sins of his heart with his own deeds and prayers of repentance.

Second, the word *"I am willing; be cleansed"* shows that God wants to save sinners and has actually completed that salvation through Christ.

Third, the centurion's faith was a faith that received the written word of God as it is, rather than feelings and experiences.

Fourth, lineage and religious career are not conditions of salvation; the person who believes the righteousness of God completed by Jesus Christ enters the kingdom of heaven.

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Fifth, service after salvation is not a price paid to obtain salvation but a fruit of gratitude for the grace received.

Sixth, Jesus took on Himself human weakness and sin, and the physical healings He gave reveal His work of saving from sin and death.

Seventh, following Jesus is not a way of gaining worldly success but a way of changing the priorities of one's life for the gospel and for souls.

Eighth, tempests strike even the saved, but because Jesus is with them, they believe the completed salvation and overcome fear.

Ninth, the power of Satan leads people to destruction and death, but Jesus subdues that power with His word and sets sinners free.

Tenth, if a person loves material things and his own righteousness more even after seeing the authority of Jesus, he can reject the gospel like the people of Gadara; therefore we must believe not miracles but the word of God.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 8 shows that Jesus completely saved, with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, the sinner who could not become clean by himself, and that the person who, like the centurion, believes that word of salvation as it is and sets the priority of his life on the gospel obtains true cleanness and life in the Lord, who is greater than disease, tempests, and the power of Satan. ✉

Matthew Chapter 8

Jesus is the Savior who rules over all powers

Introduction

Matthew chapter 8 is the chapter in which Jesus, who taught the word on the mountain, now reveals His authority in action. The events in which He healed leprosy, paralysis, and fever, cast out demons with His word, and stilled the winds and the sea show that Jesus is not a mere teacher but the Son of God, who rules disease, nature, and evil spirits.

The leper came to Jesus in a state in which he could not make himself clean. Jesus laid His hand on the man whom people kept away as unclean and made him clean at once. The centurion, without putting forward his position or merit, believed that his servant would be healed if Jesus only spoke the word. The faith of this Gentile shows that the true faith that enters the kingdom of heaven is not lineage and religious privilege but believing the Lord and His word.

Jesus raised up Peter's mother-in-law and healed many sick and demon-possessed people, having compassion on human weakness. But these healings must not be used as a promise that every believer must live free of disease in this world. Physical healing may appear differently according to the will of God, but the remission of sins given to the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is complete and the same for all.

Jesus took on all the sins of the world through the baptism

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He received from John the Baptist, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again in three days, overcoming the power of sin and death. The events in which He cleansed the sick and cast out demons show the power of the Savior who delivers souls from the power of sin and Satan. The person who believes this gospel just as the word says receives the remission of all his sins on the ground of God's verdict, not his own feelings or merits, and becomes a person of the kingdom of heaven.

Salvation is received freely by believing the gospel the Lord has completed, but the life in which the saved follow the Lord requires priorities and devotion. To the man who would follow Him to gain the world's benefit, Jesus spoke of the cost that comes with the way of the disciple; and to the disciple who would first do the work of the flesh, He said to follow Him without delay. The righteous must set the Lord who saved them in the first place of their lives and seek the life of souls and the gospel before the gain of the world.

A great tempest arose against the boat the disciples had boarded, but Jesus was with them. The demons of the region of Gadara recognized Jesus as the Son of God yet opposed Him, and the people of that region, seeming to count the loss of the herd of swine greater than the joy of two souls set free, asked Jesus to leave. Matthew chapter 8 shows that the person who has received the remission of sins must hold to the Lord's word even in the tempest, treasure souls above material things, and lead those bound by sin and the lies of Satan to the almighty Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the Savior who touched the unclean leper and made him clean once and for all

"When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, 'See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'" (Matthew 8:1–4).

Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount and came down from the mountain. Great multitudes followed Him, and from among them one leper came forward to Jesus. He was a man who could hardly mix with the crowd. Under the Law, a person judged to have leprosy was treated as unclean and had to be separated from the community, and even if he thought his disease had been healed, he could not declare himself clean. He had to be examined by the priest and confirmed clean through the procedure the Law appointed.

Yet this leper did not run far away in fear of people's eyes but came to Jesus. He did not hide his disease or dress it up as a light one. With the disease that his own strength and the methods of that day could not cure, he came just as he was before the Lord and worshiped Him. This was an act of acknowledging Jesus not as a mere healer or teacher but as the Lord who had the authority to make him clean.

In his words, *"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean,"* there is clear faith. He did not doubt the power of Jesus. He did not ask, "Can You heal me?" but confessed, *"You can make me clean."* Only, he did not put his own demand first and

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command the Lord; he acknowledged that every decision and all authority belonged to the Lord. He relied on the Lord's will and power more than on his own desperation.

Seen spiritually, the figure of the leper shows the state of man, who is born with sin and can only keep sinning all his life. As leprosy spreads through the body and puts a person in an unclean state, the sin in a person's heart keeps appearing through his thoughts, words, and actions. A person may tidy his outward appearance and hide his sin, but he cannot remove the sin of his heart by his own strength. Good deeds and self-cultivation, repeated prayers of repentance and religious zeal cannot pay in his place the price of the sins already recorded.

This does not mean that a person struck with physical disease has more sin than others, or that every disease is a punishment for some particular sin. The passage does not aim at condemning the sick. Rather, through the event in which Jesus first stretched out His hand to the man people shrank from approaching and made him clean, it shows the grace that any sinner who comes to the Lord can be saved. We should understand the disease as a picture describing the sinner's spiritual state, but never use it as a ground for condemning or shunning actual patients.

Jesus stretched out His hand and touched the leper. In those days, anyone who touched a person judged unclean could be counted unclean as well, but Jesus did not avoid him. An ordinary person is affected by uncleanness when he touches what is unclean, but the holiness and life-giving power of Jesus made the unclean man clean instead. In that touch appeared together the compassion that receives the outcast and the authority of God that removes all uncleanness.

Jesus said, *"I am willing; be cleansed."* These words show that God does not delight in the sinner perishing in his sins but

wants him to be made clean from all sin and obtain life. God not only wanted to save sinners but actually accomplished that salvation. Just as the leper did not mend his disease little by little but was made clean at once by the Lord's word, the remission of sins is not something man completes gradually by lifelong effort but a salvation received once and for all by believing the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

To make sinners clean, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came to this earth in a sinless body. And through the baptism He received from John, He took on the sins of all the people of the world. As sins were passed by the laying on of hands onto the head of the sacrificial offering in the Old Testament, Jesus received the sins of mankind onto His own body at the Jordan River. Carrying those sins, He died on the Cross shedding His blood, paying the wages of sin, and rose again in three days, overcoming sin and death.

Just as the leper came believing the power and will of Jesus, the person who would receive the remission of sins must first acknowledge his spiritual state. The person who thinks, "I have sin, but I can become clean by myself," does not seek the Savior's hand. But the person who sees the sin that keeps coming out from within him and admits that he is a sinner who can only perish believes that Jesus can make him perfectly clean, and comes to Him. True repentance is turning from hiding one's sins or trying to make up for them by works, and believing the salvation God has fulfilled.

When we believe the fact that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the sins of the heart are washed away not in part but in whole. It is not that original sin alone disappears while the sins committed daily must be washed separately by prayers of repentance. Jesus took over at once all the sins man would commit in the

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past, the present, and the future, and received the judgment of all those sins on the Cross. Therefore the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart becomes a righteous person without sin on the ground of the Lord's word.

The passage records, *"Immediately his leprosy was cleansed."* Whether he had become clean was determined not by the leper's feelings or long effort but by the word of Jesus and the result it accomplished. The remission of sins is the same. It does not hang on feelings that seem sinless one day and sinful again another day. On the ground of God's word—that Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John and ended the judgment on the Cross—the remission of sins is complete and unchanging.

That Jesus told him to tell no one can be understood as meaning that he should not spread the miracle as a curiosity or make Jesus known merely as a healer of diseases. He had first to go to the priest, show his body, and follow the procedure the Law appointed. Jesus did not disregard the Law; He had the priest officially confirm the man's cleanness so that he could return to the life of the community and of worship.

In the words *"offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them"* lies a deeper meaning of salvation. In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the unblemished offering received the sinner's sins in his place and died shedding its blood. The law of sacrifice, in which the sinner escaped judgment and received remission through the transfer of sin and the death of the offering, showed in advance the ministry of Jesus Christ who was to come. It was not the offering itself that made anyone perfect forever; Jesus, the true sacrificial offering to which those offerings pointed, accomplished the everlasting atonement.

That Jesus took on the sins of mankind through the baptism

He received from John the Baptist is the event that completed the transfer of sin which the laying on of hands in the Old Testament had pointed to. The blood of the Cross was not blood shed without sins having been taken over; it was the blood of the punishment He received in our place for the sins of the world He had borne through His baptism. Therefore the command to offer the gift Moses commanded as a testimony was at once an order confirming his cleansing to the priest and a witness revealing that the Savior to whom the Old Testament offerings pointed is Jesus Himself.

The person who has received the remission of sins must also have a testimony. That testimony is not a special experience, a vision, or the heat of emotion, but the written word of God. He must be able to explain clearly with the gospel of the water and the Spirit what kind of sinner he was and how Jesus took over and was judged for his sins. When he believes the word that the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus removed all his sins, the Holy Spirit gives his heart the assurance of the remission of sins.

Just as the cleansed leper could return to the community, the person who has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit recovers fellowship with God and comes to live as His people. Once he could not draw near to God because of sin, but now he calls God Father in the standing of the righteous. He also testifies of the grace that made him clean to other souls, and leads those still under the condemnation of sin to Jesus Christ.

Matthew chapter 8 verses 1–4 shows that no sinner can make himself clean, but Jesus is willing and fully able to make him clean. He did not avoid the unclean man but stretched out His hand and made him whole at once with His word. The sinner must not lean on his own effort but believe the salvation

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Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, holds the word of God as the sure testimony of his remission, and lives delivering to others the grace of the Lord who made him clean.

Jesus praised the faith of the centurion who believed the authority of His word

"Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.' And his servant was healed that same hour" (Matthew 8:5–13).

When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came and pleaded for his servant. A centurion commanded about a

hundred soldiers, so he was a man with the authority to order and employ people. Yet he did not put forward his position and power. He acknowledged that with his own ability he could not heal the servant lying at home in dreadful torment, and he came to Jesus.

The centurion did not regard his servant merely as a possession or a tool for work. Seeing the servant suffering from paralysis, he took that pain to heart as his own problem and asked Jesus for help. Jesus did not turn away from his plea but answered, *"I will come and heal him."* This shows the mercy of the Lord, who has compassion on the suffering beyond status and nation.

But the centurion said he could not bear for Jesus to come into his house. This was not a word of refusal but a confession that humbled himself before the holiness and majesty of Jesus. He did not see Jesus as an ordinary man good at healing diseases. He believed Him to be the Lord who could rule over disease with a word from where He stood—not a limited healer who could work only if brought into his house.

The confession *"But only speak a word"* is the most important part of the centurion's faith. He did not say he would believe only if he saw the process of the miracle with his eyes or if Jesus laid His hand directly on the servant's body. He believed that when Jesus spoke, the word would be fulfilled just so even where it could not be seen. His faith did not depend on any sign or feeling; it came from knowing who Jesus is and what authority His word carries.

The centurion explained that he too was a man under authority and had soldiers under him. He knew the order of the army: when his superior commanded, he obeyed; and when he told a subordinate to go, he went, and to come, he came. Through this experience he understood that Jesus is the highest

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Authority, ruling all disease, life, and all things. He believed that if even his own command moved his subordinates, then before the command of Jesus, the King of kings, disease could only retreat.

The heart of this faith does not lie in the idea that positive thinking makes what one wants come true. The centurion did not believe the power of his own thoughts; he believed Jesus and the word of Jesus. Faith is not mental force that produces the results a person wants; it is receiving as true what God has spoken. A desire of one's own, apart from the Lord's will and promise, cannot be called faith. True faith humbles itself and commits everything to the authority of the Lord who speaks.

Jesus heard the centurion's words and marveled. And He said to those who followed that He had not found such great faith even in Israel. The centurion, a Gentile, was not of the people who had first received the Law and the covenant, yet he acknowledged Jesus as Lord and believed the absolute authority of His word. On the other hand, many people of Israel, though they had the Scriptures and the promise of the Messiah, did not believe Jesus who had come before their eyes.

What the Lord praised was not the centurion's military career or good deeds. His compassion for his servant was precious, but it was not that which became the merit of salvation. What Jesus saw was the faith that did not put forward his own qualifications but trusted that Jesus is the Son of God and that His word is surely fulfilled. The remission of sins likewise is not obtained by a person's position or lineage, good deeds or religious zeal; it is received by believing with the heart the word God has fulfilled.

The sinner, like the servant lying with paralysis, cannot rise from the place of sin by his own strength and go to God. He can neither erase the sins already committed nor stop by

himself the sins that will come out of his flesh. But God spoke His promise to save sinners, and He actually fulfilled that word through Jesus Christ. Salvation is received not from vague feelings or mystical experiences but from knowing and believing as it is the ministry of Jesus recorded in the Scriptures.

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came to this earth as the sinless Son of God. And through the baptism He received from John, He took on all the sins of all mankind. Jesus, carrying the sins of the world, died on the Cross shedding His blood, receiving the punishment of those sins in our place, and rose again in three days, becoming the perfect Savior. Since God has recorded this fact in His word, we can receive the remission of sins by believing the word even though we did not see the scene with our own eyes.

Just as the centurion believed that the word of Jesus was not limited by distance and circumstances, the power of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not limited by time or place. The word that Jesus took on all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist applies not only to the sins of the people of that time but to all our sins today. When we receive that word into our hearts, the sins that passed over to Jesus can no longer remain with us, and the judgment of the Cross need not be received again.

Jesus said that many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. This shows that God's salvation is not shut within the lineage of one nation but will be delivered to all the peoples of the world. Just as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were counted righteous by believing God's promise, a person of any nation who believes the salvation God fulfilled through Jesus Christ can take part in the same feast of heaven.

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On the other hand, the word that *"the sons of the kingdom"* will be cast out into outer darkness is a solemn warning that lineage and religious privilege in themselves do not guarantee salvation. This is not a word condemning all the people of Israel wholesale; it points to the unbelief that received the promise first yet rejects Jesus, the fulfillment of the promise. No one can enter the kingdom of heaven by the mere fact of being Abraham's physical descendant; one must receive the word of God with the same faith as Abraham.

This warning applies just as it is to those who belong to the church today. Having attended church long, held offices, and possessed much religious knowledge is not evidence of salvation. If a person calls on the name of Jesus yet does not believe that He took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John, and sin remains in his heart, he does not have the faith of the kingdom of heaven. More important than the privilege of having encountered the gospel first is actually believing that gospel in one's heart.

The faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit has the same character as the faith of the centurion who confessed, *"But only speak a word."* When the Scriptures say that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection, it is receiving that word as right, above one's own feelings and former religious notions. Even at moments when it feels as if sin remained in the heart, we must not call ourselves sinners again on the standard of feelings, but believe God's verdict that He has removed all sins.

When Jesus said, *"Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you,"* the servant was healed at that very hour. It was not the centurion's faith that produced the healing power; the word of Jesus healed the servant, and the centurion

received that authority by faith. In the same way, the power that saves us lies not in the act of believing itself but in Jesus, the object of our faith, and in the gospel He has completed. Faith is like the hand that receives as one's own the salvation the Lord has already accomplished.

This faith is needed in the life that follows the remission of sins as well. When hardship and the weakness of the flesh visit the righteous, if he looks only at his own ability and circumstances he can fall into fear. But when he believes the fact that the Lord is his Savior and Shepherd, knows what he needs, and leads him with the word, he rises again by faith. It is not claiming that everything he prays for will be done as he wills, but holding the word God has promised and living in trust of His will and guidance.

Matthew chapter 8 verses 5–13 shows that Jesus is God, who works by His word beyond distance, disease, and human limits. The centurion relied not on his own qualifications or visible signs but on Jesus and His word. Likewise, whoever believes, not lineage and merit, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, just as the word says, receives the remission of sins and becomes a person of the kingdom of heaven. And even after being saved, he holds the Lord's word and lives by faith beyond his own limits.

Jesus is the Savior who takes our infirmities and makes us whole with His word

"Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them. When

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evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses'" (Matthew 8:14–17).

After healing the centurion's servant with His word in Capernaum, Jesus entered Peter's house. There Peter's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. The places where Jesus met the sick were not only the temple or the square where crowds gathered. He entered the ordinary home of a disciple and looked upon the suffering of a family. This shows that the Lord knows and cares not only for people's public problems but also for the weakness and pain hidden within the home.

The passage does not record that Peter's mother-in-law first pleaded with Jesus to heal her. Jesus saw her lying sick with the fever and touched her hand. Though her request is not recorded in detail, the Lord knew her condition and need first. His touch was the touch of love that pities the sick, and the touch that carries the Creator's authority that drives out disease.

When Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her. It does not say that a long recovery was needed or that her condition improved little by little; it records that the woman rose at once and served Jesus. The Lord's healing did not merely lower her fever; it was a healing that restored her fully, so that she could rise, move, and serve. Jesus is the One who not only lifts people out of suffering but also gives them the strength to live a meaningful life again.

The woman served Jesus not because she had to repay the cost of the healing. Grace is not a transaction bought at a price. Thankful for the recovery she had received from the Lord, she served Him naturally with her newly gained health and strength. This picture connects with the life of the person who has

received the remission of sins. The person saved by believing the gospel does not pay for salvation with service and good deeds; he serves the Lord and the gospel with his body, time, and talents out of gratitude for the grace already freely received.

The fever in the passage is first of all an actual disease of the body. Therefore we must not arbitrarily turn every detail into a merely spiritual symbol. Yet from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it calls to mind the state of the religious person who is ceaselessly tormented by the unsolved problem of sin. Though he says he believes in Jesus, sin remains in his heart, so he tries to remove it with prayers of repentance and his own efforts, but the same condemnation and fear repeat, and his heart finds no rest.

However much a person tries to solve the problem of sin within his own thoughts, he cannot reach a complete answer. The belief that original sin has been remitted but the sins committed daily must be washed by continual repentance, or that one becomes whole only after lifelong sanctification, cannot end the fundamental problem that sin remains in the heart. The sinner must escape the endless repetition of his own thoughts and be led by the word of God. When he knows and believes exactly the word of the remission of sins the Lord has completed, he is released from the fever-like torment of condemnation.

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and came to this earth in a sinless body, and through the baptism He received from John He took on the sins of all the people of the world. Carrying those sins, He hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and rose again in three days, becoming the perfect Savior. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit does not become righteous someday by gradually reducing his sins; the

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moment he believes the word that the Lord has removed all his sins, he receives the remission of sins once and for all.

When evening came, people brought many who were demon-possessed to Jesus. Among them there must have been some who could hardly come to Jesus by their own strength. That people did not turn away from the suffering but brought them to Jesus makes us think of what those who know the gospel today must do. We must not condemn or abandon souls bound by sin, false teaching, and the deceptions of Satan, but lead them so that they can hear the word of the gospel Jesus has fulfilled.

Jesus cast out the demons with His word, using no special rite or incantation. The demons knew His identity and authority and could not defy His command. Jesus is the Son of God, stronger than Satan, and the King of kings. Therefore the true spiritual battle does not hang on a person's loud voice or excited behavior but on the word of truth that testifies who Jesus Christ is and what He has accomplished.

When a person believes the fact that Jesus took on all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the sin Satan uses as the ground of condemnation disappears from his heart. Satan shows a person his sins and weaknesses and keeps deceiving him that he is a sinner, but the believer boldly stands against him with the word that Jesus took over all sins and ended the judgment on the Cross. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who believes the gospel that sin has completely disappeared, Satan can no longer be that person's master.

Yet we must not immediately judge every mental illness or unusual behavior as demon possession. Demon possession in the Scriptures and medical or mental illness must be distinguished carefully, and we must not condemn the sick or

hinder their treatment. Where needed, proper medical treatment and care should be received. The focus of the passage is not on branding sufferers but on the fact that Jesus has the authority that rules evil spirits and disease.

Jesus healed all who were sick. These healings were signs showing that Jesus is not a mere teacher but the Messiah, who rules life and the body. The King of the kingdom of God had come into the world where suffering and death had entered through sin, and in Him is the life that restores from sin, disease, and death. The healing ministry of Jesus shows in advance the complete restoration in the coming kingdom of God, where every tear, pain, and death will disappear.

Matthew declares that these events were to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah: *"He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."* Jesus did not look at people's suffering from afar and comfort them with words only. He carried our weaknesses and our sicknesses as His own and came in among the sick. His compassion did not stay in feeling but appeared as actual healing and salvation.

We must not misunderstand the word that Jesus took our infirmities and sicknesses as a promise that every believer will always be healed at once in this world. Physical disease and weakness can remain even with the person who has received the remission of sins, and God sometimes teaches humility and faith through certain sufferings. Therefore we must not condemn a person whose disease is not healed as having no faith. The believer prays for healing and receives proper help, but he must leave the time and manner of the answer to the wisdom of God.

But concerning the salvation that remits all sins, there is no need to speak uncertainly. Since Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John and paid the price

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in full on the Cross, the person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all his sins now. Physical healing may appear in various ways in this world according to God's will, but the remission of sins given to the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is complete and the same. And on the day of the final resurrection, we will put on a body that does not decay or fall sick, and salvation will appear perfectly even in the body.

The person who has received the remission of sins can bring even his weaknesses to the Lord. He can pray to the living God without hiding his sickness and pain, the hardships of his heart and the lack of his faith. The Lord sometimes heals the disease, sometimes gives strength and wisdom to endure, and sometimes leads through people and the help of treatment. In whatever way, the believer must trust that his life is in the Lord's hand and hold on to the word.

The saved person must also serve the Lord with the strength he has received, like Peter's mother-in-law. The purpose for which Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and gave us new life with the Cross and the resurrection is not merely that an individual escape condemnation and live comfortably. The believer must deliver to others the gospel that saved him, care for the weak, and lead souls bound by sin and falsehood before the word of life.

Matthew chapter 8 verses 14–17 shows that Jesus is the Savior who rules the diseases of the body and the evil spirits and has compassion on every human weakness. He stretched out His hand and raised the sick, cast out demons with His word, and, according to the prophet's word, took our infirmities on Himself. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is completely released from sin and

condemnation, entrusts all his weakness to the Lord, and lives serving the Lord and other souls with the life and strength he has received.

The disciple who follows Jesus must choose the Lord and the gospel before the world's gain

"And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then another of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead'" (Matthew 8:18–22).

When Jesus cleansed the leper, healed the centurion's servant and Peter's mother-in-law, and cast out demons with His word, great multitudes surrounded Him. People were amazed at His word and power and gathered to receive healing and various kinds of help. But Jesus did not linger in the people's popularity or try to turn the great crowd into His own following. He commanded the disciples to cross to the other side and kept walking the way of the ministry God had entrusted to Him.

The mere fact that many people gathered does not mean that all had become true disciples. Among the crowd were those who believed and followed Jesus for who He is, but also those who came to gain visible miracles and the benefit of the flesh. The Lord was not concerned simply to increase the number of followers; He looked at the heart and the purpose with which each person followed Him. For the way of

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following Jesus is not a means of gaining the success of the world but a way of giving oneself for the will of God and the salvation of souls.

Then a scribe came to Jesus and said, *"Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."* The scribe was an intellectual who studied and taught the Law. He may have been deeply impressed by Jesus' teaching and miracles, and he expressed an active will to follow Him anywhere. His words alone sound like the confession of an excellent disciple. But Jesus did not praise his enthusiasm at once; He first told him the real shape of the way of following Him.

Jesus said, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."* Even foxes and birds have places to rest, but Jesus, who came as the Son of Man, had no place He could claim as His own and stay in comfort. God, who created all things, came to this earth in a human body, but the world did not receive its own Creator. To save sinners, the Lord had to bear poverty, rejection, and toil, and go at last even the way of the Cross.

These words do not mean that poverty itself is holy, or that everyone who believes in Jesus must give up house and property. The believer may work honestly, care for his family, and use with thanksgiving the material things God has given. Only, we must not think that following Jesus guarantees wealth, honor, and comfort in the world. The person who follows the Lord with the aim of worldly gain turns away easily when hardship and loss come.

Jesus exposed the motive within the scribe's heart and made him first count the cost of following. The Lord's disciple is not a person who uses Jesus to fulfill his own desires but a person who lays down his desires to follow the way Jesus went. Following the Lord does not stop at promising with the lips, *"I*

will follow You wherever You go"; it is actually changing the priorities of one's life in the direction the Lord's word and the gospel require.

Yet this life of the disciple is not a merit for first receiving the remission of sins. Sins are not washed away because a person abandons property and security and sacrifices himself. Salvation does not begin from our resolution and sacrifice but from believing the righteousness Jesus has completed. The person who would be saved by his own deeds cannot remove the sins of his heart however much he gives up, and he can even turn the appearance of following the Lord into a religious life that builds his self-righteousness.

To save sinners, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, came to this earth, and took on the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John. Carrying those sins, He hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and rose again in three days. A person receives the remission of sins freely by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart and becomes a child of God. Then, thankful for the grace that saved him, he lives as the Lord's disciple.

The passage also records another disciple's request: *"Lord, let me first go and bury my father."* Holding a parent's funeral is humanly proper and does not go against the spirit of the Law. Honoring one's family and taking responsibility for a parent's last days is an important duty. Yet Jesus answered that request, *"Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."*

These words are not a universal command that believers must not hold funerals for their parents or may disregard family responsibilities. Jesus dealt with the *"first"* in the disciple's words. A person can keep postponing while saying he will follow the Lord—"after this work is finished," "after my

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circumstances improve," "after all the family matters are settled." But when one earthly matter is finished, another arises, and for the person who would follow the Lord only after everything is done, the time to follow never comes.

"*The dead"* refers to those who are physically alive but spiritually dead, severed from the relationship of life with God. They can take up the affairs of the world and the duty of burial, but the disciple who has received the gospel of life has a more urgent mission: to deliver the word of salvation to dying souls. Burying the body is the settling of a dead person's remains, but preaching the gospel is the work of rescuing living sinners from everlasting destruction so that they obtain life.

The word of Jesus, *"Follow Me,"* was a clear calling given to that disciple personally. It means: do not watch what others do or compare your task with theirs—you yourself must follow the Lord. The disciple is not one who follows the fashions of the world or his own desires but one who follows the words and footsteps of Jesus. Since the Lord saved souls, the disciple also must count the salvation of souls the most precious work and live for it.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit must first know his own standing clearly. Since Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and ended the judgment on the Cross, the believer no longer belongs to sin and Satan but is a child of God. The life of following the Lord is not the process of a sinner striving to become righteous; it is the life in which one who has already become righteous follows Jesus, his true Master.

Fleshly desires and practical responsibilities remain with the saved as well. Caring for one's family, holding a job, and making a living are not wrong in themselves. In fact, many believers serve the gospel while faithfully doing their work at

home and at work. What matters is what one sets as the final purpose and the first place of life. If a person puts the affairs of the flesh before God and serves the gospel only when there is time to spare, the affairs of the world have become his master.

Conversely, following the Lord first does not mean abandoning all daily life and unconditionally becoming a full-time minister. Within the same job and family one can seek the Lord's will first, work honestly, serve the gospel with the material things and time received, and deliver the word of salvation to those one meets. One person may devote himself entirely to the ministry of the gospel and another may serve in the place of daily life, but all must set the Lord and the gospel at the center of life.

The fact that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John and walked the way of salvation without even a place to lay His head moves the heart of the believer. The Lord is not One who demanded only sacrifice from us; He first gave Himself wholly. Since He bore in our place sin, poverty, rejection, and the suffering of the Cross, the believer can offer his life to the Lord not by compulsion or fear but in gratitude for that love.

In following the Lord one may meet loss and discomfort in the flesh, and misunderstanding and rejection from people. Then the believer must look not only at the reward gained in this world but at Jesus who saved him and at the everlasting kingdom of God. The way of being Jesus' disciple is not always a comfortable way on this earth, but it is never a vain way either. The Lord does not abandon those who follow Him; He supplies what they need and repays the labor given for the gospel with everlasting fruit.

The purpose for which Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and gave new life

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through the Cross and the resurrection is not that the saved should live again only for themselves. The believer must deliver the word of life to those who are spiritually dead, not yet knowing the gospel. The deepest way of loving one's family also does not end at supplying the needs of the flesh; it is helping them believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtain everlasting life.

Matthew chapter 8 verses 18–22 makes us examine the motive and the priority of following Jesus. To the scribe who said he would follow without counting the cost, He spoke of the cost of a way with no place to lay one's head; and to the disciple who wanted to attend to an earthly matter first, He commanded him to follow without delay. Salvation is received freely by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit Jesus fulfilled, but the saved must live as disciples who set the Lord who saved them in the first place of life and seek the life of souls and the gospel before the gain of the world.

Jesus is with us even in the tempest and stills every fear with His word

"Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!' But He said to them, 'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?' Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, 'Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?'" (Matthew 8:23–27).

When Jesus got into the boat, the disciples followed Him

aboard. Earlier Jesus had commanded, *"Follow Me,"* and the disciples actually followed the Lord into the boat. They were crossing to the other side in obedience to the Lord's command. Yet on the very way of rightly following the Lord, a great tempest arose. This shows that being with Jesus and obeying His word does not mean that no hardship will arise in life.

The tempest that arose on the sea was fierce enough to cover the boat. Among the disciples were fishermen who had made their living on the Sea of Galilee, so they were not men ignorant of boats and waves. That such men thought of death shows how truly perilous the situation was. Their fear did not come from mere imagination. They had reached the limit beyond which human experience and skill could not go, and so they judged that their lives could end.

Yet while the waves covered the boat, Jesus was asleep. This shows that Jesus came in a true human body. Wearied by continual teaching, healing, and travel, He slept even amid the fierce waves. At the same time, His sleep shows the peace of One who is not afraid in the least before the winds and the sea. Jesus slept not because He was ignorant of the situation or lacked power; He was in the boat as God, who rules all things.

The disciples woke the sleeping Jesus, crying, *"Lord, save us! We are perishing!"* Coming to the Lord and asking for salvation in the crisis was the right thing to do. When a person meets a situation he cannot solve with his own ability, he must not stay alone in despair but pray to the Lord. God already knows our circumstances, but He wants the believer to admit his helplessness, ask for help, and depend on Him.

But in the disciples' words faith and fear were mixed together. They called Jesus *"Lord"* and thought He could save them, yet at the same time they had already concluded their destruction, saying, *"We are perishing."* They saw the waves

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before their eyes as greater than the fact that Jesus was with them in the boat and had commanded them to cross to the other side. When they trusted the voice of the situation more than the word of the Lord, their hearts were seized by fear.

Jesus did not first rebuke the winds and the sea; He said to the disciples, *"Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?"* For the center of the problem lay not only in the tempest outside but also in the little faith in the disciples' hearts. Had they fully believed that Jesus was with them, they could have trusted that however fierce the waves, the Lord would not abandon them and would save them at the needed time.

It is also important that Jesus called the disciples not people of no faith but "*of little faith."* The disciples had the faith to follow Jesus and to ask His help, but that faith could not yet exert its strength before actual danger. The Lord did not abandon them or drive them from the boat; through the stilling of the tempest He taught them who He is. The disciples' little faith had to grow through experiencing the Lord's authority.

This event applies to the life of the believer who has received the remission of sins. Being saved by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean that all circumstances soon become smooth. Unexpected hardships can strike one's health and livelihood, home and workplace, the work of serving the gospel and the church. As a great tempest arose even against the boat Jesus had boarded, the people and the community that belong to the Lord also pass through trials and tribulations in this world.

Therefore we must not judge from the mere fact that hardship has come that God has abandoned us or that our salvation has failed. The tempest does not mean the absence of the Lord. Rather, through experiencing the limits of his own strength, the believer learns more deeply that Jesus his Savior

is almighty God and the Master of his life. God sometimes allows hardship so that we turn from relying only on human methods, pray to the Lord, and hold to the word.

When the believer meets a tempest of faith, the first place he must return to is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus took on the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again in three days. If the Lord, who accomplished all this to save us from the judgment of hell, has already solved the greatest problems of all—sin and death—He does not turn away from the present life of His saved children either.

When hardship strikes, Satan can expose the believer's weakness and wrongs and condemn him: "You are a sinner, abandoned by God." But the fact that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist does not change in any circumstance. The believer must not make the feelings and condemnation that surge like waves the standard of his faith, but return to the word that Jesus took over all sins and ended the judgment on the Cross.

Faith is not the attitude of denying the danger before one's eyes as if it did not exist. Water actually came into the boat the disciples rode, and actual economic, physical, and relational hardships arise in the believer's life. Faith is seeing the danger accurately while acknowledging that the Lord's authority is greater than that danger. It is taking the necessary measures and seeking people's help while setting one's final reliance and hope on the living God.

Jesus arose and rebuked the winds and the sea. Then the rough sea did not merely weaken a little; it became *"a great calm."* Nature recognized the Creator's command at once and obeyed. This reveals that Jesus is beyond an excellent prophet

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or a man of power—He is God, who made and rules the winds and the sea. The One who accomplished all things by His word at creation was in the same boat with the disciples, clothed in flesh.

The men marveled, saying, *"Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"* They had already seen Jesus heal the sick and cast out demons, but through this event they came to know His identity and authority more deeply. Jesus is not only One who gives help for a moment in hard times; He is the Creator of all things and the Lord who rules even life and death. Faith does not stop at receiving things from Jesus; it is a life of continually coming to know who He is.

This boat also makes us think of the church that preaches the gospel amid hardship. The passage does not directly interpret the boat as the church, but the boat that did not sink in the tempest while the Lord and the disciples were aboard shows who the Master of the church is. Financial hardship and internal conflict, false teaching and outside persecution can arise in the church, but the true Master of the church is not man but Jesus. Believers must not rely on human wisdom alone but pray together and obey the word of the Lord.

Just as Jesus' sleeping did not mean He was not caring for the disciples, the answer to prayer not being immediately visible does not mean God is not working. There can be times when the Lord seems silent to the believer. At such times we must not hastily conclude, *"We are perishing,"* but believe the fact that the Lord is in the same boat and is leading us to the destination He promised. Trusting God's time and method, we must keep asking for the help we need.

The truth that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John is the firmest anchor the believer holds in the tempest. The circumstances and feelings of the flesh

keep changing, but the salvation Jesus accomplished does not change. The Lord gave even His life to make us His people, so He does not abandon us in tribulation. On the ground of this gospel the believer calls God Father and boldly asks for help.

The person who believes the word that Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and accomplished everlasting salvation with the Cross and the resurrection has hope even in the face of death. Even if the Lord does not still the tempest, the believer's everlasting life does not collapse. The answer to the problems of this earth may appear differently according to God's will and time, but the promise of the remission of sins, the resurrection, and the kingdom of heaven is already completed.

Matthew chapter 8 verses 23–27 shows that a great tempest can arise even on the way of following the Lord, but Jesus is in that boat. The disciples woke the Lord in fear, and Jesus, while rebuking their little faith, stilled the winds and the sea. The person saved by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not first conclude destruction when hardship strikes, but pray to Jesus, who overcame sin and death, and hold to His word. Through such experience he comes to believe more deeply that the Lord is not only the Savior but almighty God, who rules his life, the church, and the whole world.

Jesus is the Son of God who delivers souls from the power of Satan

"When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, 'What have we

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to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?' Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, 'If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.' And He said to them, 'Go.' So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region" (Matthew 8:28–34).

After stilling the winds and the sea, Jesus arrived across the sea in the region of Gadara. There two demon-possessed men came out from among the tombs and met Him. They were staying not in the normal living space of people but among the tombs of the dead. They were shut up in a place cut off from the relationships of life, ruled by death and fear.

The two men were so fierce that no one could pass that way. The demons had not only destroyed their personhood and lives, but also brought fear and danger to those around them. People could neither restrain them nor restore them to a whole life. But to these men whom no one could approach, Jesus came. The Lord did not turn away even from souls people had given up and kept far off; He met them to deliver them from the rule of Satan.

The passage is an event that happened to people actually seized by demons. It must not be treated as identical with every mental illness or violent behavior. Mental and neurological illnesses need proper medical diagnosis and treatment, and we must not brand patients as demon-possessed or hinder their

treatment. The center of the passage is not condemning sufferers but showing that every evil spirit can only submit before the authority of Jesus.

In the spiritual sense, the figure of these men living among the tombs makes us think of the state of man under the power of sin and death. Even if a person is physically alive, if his relationship of life with God is severed, he is spiritually dead. Satan draws people away from God with lies and desires, makes them follow only their own will and sin, and then shuts them up in condemnation and fear. Man may polish his outward appearance with religion and self-cultivation, but he cannot completely escape the power of sin and death by his own strength.

When the demons within them saw Jesus, they called Him *"You Son of God."* The disciples had marveled, *"Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"*—but the demons recognized at once who Jesus was. Yet knowing Jesus' identity as knowledge is not the faith that saves. The demons called Jesus the Son of God accurately, but they did not love Him or receive Him as Savior; they opposed Him, saying, *"What have we to do with You?"*

Today as well, knowing much biblical knowledge and doctrine about Jesus does not necessarily mean being saved. A person can acknowledge with his head that Jesus is the Son of God and was crucified, while not believing with his heart how He removed that person's own sins. Saving faith does not stop at knowing information about Jesus; it receives the gospel of the water and the Spirit He fulfilled as the salvation of one's own soul.

The demons said, *"Have You come here to torment us before the time?"* This shows that they knew they would be judged at the time God has appointed. The activity of Satan and

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the evil spirits does not continue forever. Jesus is the Judge who will decide their final judgment, and the time and authority of that judgment also belong wholly to the Lord. The very fact that the demons had to beg before Jesus shows that they are not independent powers but limited beings under the Lord's permission.

While a herd of many swine was feeding far off, the demons asked that, if cast out, they be sent into the herd. When Jesus said, *"Go,"* the demons came out at once and entered the swine. Jesus used no complicated rite and fought no long battle. With a single command He cast out the demons, and the evil spirits could only obey His word. This shows that Jesus is the King of kings, stronger than Satan.

The herd of swine the demons entered rushed down the steep place and perished in the sea. This event reveals that the essential aim of evil spirits is not to give life but to destroy and kill. Satan first deceives people as if he would give them benefit and freedom, but in the end he drives them into sin and desire and brings their souls to destruction. The herd that could not stop itself but ran to its death shows visibly the destructive result of the rule of the spirit of falsehood.

There is no need to fix the herd of swine as a symbol of some particular class of people. In the passage the actual death of the herd happened first. Yet as a spiritual lesson, we may receive the warning that the heart that chases only the world's wealth and the desires of the flesh rather than the life of heaven is vulnerable to Satan's deception. If the purpose of believing God is only to become rich, be healed, and succeed in the world, that faith is not serving Jesus as Savior but a religion using Him as a means to fulfill one's own desires.

The fundamental power by which Jesus sets people free from the rule of demons is in the gospel of the water and the

Spirit. Jesus took on the sins of all the people of the world through the baptism He received from John, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again in three days. Since Jesus took over and was judged for the sin that is Satan's ground for condemning people and dragging them to death, the person who believes this gospel escapes the power of sin and Satan.

When a person believes the fact that Jesus took on all his sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the sin that remained in his heart disappears and the Holy Spirit comes upon him. Satan seizes on the fact that a person is a sinner and condemns him, but if Jesus took over all sins and ended the punishment on the Cross, there is no ground left for condemnation. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the Holy Spirit becomes a child of God belonging to Jesus Christ, and Satan can no longer be his master.

This does not mean that the saved face no temptation or attack from Satan at all. Satan tries to breathe fear, desire, and lies into the believer through his thoughts and circumstances. But the believer has the word of the gospel with which to discern and repel those lies. The center of the spiritual battle is not special incantations or emotional behavior, but believing the truth that Jesus has removed all one's sins and obeying the word, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Those who kept the swine ran into the city and told what had happened to the herd and to the demon-possessed men. Then the whole city came out to meet Jesus. It looks as if they came out to believe in Jesus after seeing the amazing salvation, but their final response was to beg the Lord to leave their region. They counted the economic loss of the herd of swine, and their fear of Jesus' authority, greater than the joy of two

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men freed from Satan's oppression.

Their response reveals what people count most precious. If a person values property and the stability of life more than the salvation of a soul, he can find it burdensome for Jesus to work change in his life. To receive the gospel he must abandon wrong beliefs and desires, and the master of his life must change; so instead of rejoicing in salvation, a person can refuse the Lord, saying, "Leave my life."

Jesus does not force His stay against people's request. The gospel is not the forcible injection of faith into a person. God wants to save sinners, but if a person chooses the world and possessions to the end and refuses the Lord, the result of judgment follows that choice. The people of Gadara received the great opportunity of meeting Jesus in person, but because of the loss before their eyes they sent away the Lord of life.

This scene also teaches what the church and the believer must put first. The mission of the church does not lie in increasing worldly success and property but in leading souls bound by sin and the lies of Satan to Jesus. We must not merely demand that people live virtuously or add religious works; we must clearly deliver, with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, how Jesus removed sin.

The word that Jesus took on all our sins through the baptism He received from John keeps us from giving up on any sinner. Though in men's eyes someone seems too fierce and obstinate ever to receive the gospel, the word of the Lord can set his heart free from the lies of Satan. Therefore the believer, rather than hating or condemning the person who refuses the gospel, must pray that he may hear the truth, be patient, and lead him before the word of life.

The person who believes the fact that Jesus took on all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and

completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection comes to count the life of one soul more precious than worldly gain and loss. Material things are necessary but not everlasting, and however much one owns, if he perishes because of sin it profits nothing. The believer must use the material things, time, and strength given him for saving souls and preaching the gospel.

Matthew chapter 8 verses 28–34 shows that the power of Satan leads people to death and destruction but collapses before a single word of Jesus. The demons knew that Jesus is the Son of God and knew the coming judgment, yet refused any relationship with Him, and the people of Gadara also put their material loss first and asked Jesus to leave. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit escapes the rule of sin and Satan and becomes a person of the Holy Spirit; he treasures the life of souls above the gain of the world, and lives leading those still bound by sin and falsehood to Jesus Christ. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 8

[Question] 1. Explain the main events and the central content of Matthew chapter 8.

Matthew chapter 8 records the various works Jesus did after finishing the Sermon on the Mount and coming down from the mountain. If Matthew chapters 5–7 showed the authoritative words of Jesus, chapter 8 shows the authority of those words actually revealed over disease, nature, and the forces of demons. Through this it testifies that Jesus is not a mere teacher or miracle worker but the Son of God who came to save sinners and the Creator who rules all things.

First, a leper came to Jesus, worshiped Him, and confessed that if the Lord was willing, He could make him clean. Jesus touched him and told him to be cleansed, and immediately his leprosy was cleansed. That Jesus Himself laid His hand on the unclean man whom people of that day shrank from approaching shows the Lord's heart, which pities sinners and wants to make them clean.

Spiritually, leprosy represents the figure of man, who is born with sin and lives committing sin continually. Man cannot cure the disease of sin by his own effort, but Jesus took on all the sins of the world onto His own body through the baptism He received from John, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, making everyone who believes clean from all sin. The event of cleansing the leper shows the saving work of Jesus, who makes sinners clean.

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Jesus told the healed man to show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, testifying to the fact that he had been made clean.

Next, in Capernaum a centurion pleaded with Jesus for his servant, who was suffering with paralysis. The centurion said he could not bear for Jesus to enter his house, and believed that if He only commanded with a word, the servant would be healed. Through the army's chain of command he believed the authority by which every disease obeys the word of Jesus. Jesus marveled at this faith, saying He had not found such faith even in Israel, and as the centurion believed, the servant was healed at that hour.

This event shows that being a physical descendant of Abraham or having religious status cannot bring a person into the kingdom of heaven. Even the Gentile centurion received grace by believing the word of Jesus, but the sons of the kingdom who do not believe the word of God will be cast out into outer darkness. Salvation and the blessing of God are received not by lineage or human merit but by the faith that believes the word of God.

At Peter's house Jesus touched the hand of Peter's mother-in-law, who lay sick with a fever, and healed her, and the healed woman rose and served Him. When evening came, people brought many demon-possessed and sick people, and Jesus cast out the demons with His word and healed the sick. Matthew testifies that this fulfilled the prophecy spoken by the prophet Isaiah, *"He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."* This shows that Jesus is the Savior who would take on not only people's physical suffering but also sin, the curse, and every spiritual disease.

In verses 18–22 appears the posture of the disciple who follows Jesus. A scribe said he would follow Jesus wherever

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He went, but Jesus said that the Son of Man has nowhere even to lay His head. This means we must not follow the Lord expecting fleshly success and a comfortable life. When another disciple asked to be allowed first to bury his father, Jesus told him to let the dead bury their own dead and to follow Him. These words are not so much a command to disregard a parent's funeral as a teaching not to put the affairs of the world before the Lord's work of saving souls, and to give one's whole heart to following the will of God.

When Jesus and the disciples were crossing the sea by boat, a great tempest arose so that the waves covered the boat. The disciples woke Jesus, saying they were about to die, but Jesus rebuked them as people of little faith and rebuked the winds and the sea into a great calm. Just as the tempest struck even the boat where Jesus was, hardship can come to the church of God and to the life of the saints. But the saints must not look only at their circumstances in fear; they must pray to the Lord, who rules every problem, and entrust it to Him. That even the winds and the sea obeyed the word of Jesus reveals that He is God, who created and rules all things.

Finally, in the region of Gadara Jesus met two fierce demon-possessed men who dwelt among the tombs. The demons recognized Jesus as the Son of God and begged Him to let them enter the herd of swine. When Jesus permitted it, the demons entered the swine, and the herd ran down the steep place and perished in the sea. This event shows that even the forces of Satan and the demons are under the command of Jesus, and that Jesus has the authority to set free those seized by evil spirits.

But the people of the region of Gadara counted the material loss of the herd of swine greater than the fact that the demon-possessed men had been released, and they begged Jesus to

leave their region. This shows the foolishness of people who treasure riches and the profit of the flesh more than the salvation of souls. The church of God, on the contrary, must carry out the work of leading souls who live captive to Satan to Jesus, so that they hear the true gospel and are saved.

The center of Matthew chapter 8, therefore, is the word of Jesus Christ and His saving authority. Jesus healed leprosy, paralysis, and fever, cast out demons, and made even the winds and the sea obey. At the same time He taught that true faith is believing His word as it is, and that the true disciple must put the Lord's will and the work of saving souls before the profit of the flesh. Matthew chapter 8 clearly testifies that Jesus, who rules even sin, disease, nature, and the forces of evil spirits and saves sinners, is the Son of God and our true Savior.

[Question] 2. How does Matthew 8:1 record the response of the multitudes to Jesus when He came down from the mountain?

Matthew 8:1 records, "*When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.*" When Jesus finished the Sermon on the Mount and came down from the mountain, very many people followed Him.

The multitudes followed Jesus because they were astonished at His authoritative teaching and took great interest in the healings and the many works of power He performed. Among them were people who wanted to hear more of the word and believe in Jesus, and also people who wanted healing and fleshly help.

Therefore, the mere fact that many people outwardly followed Jesus does not mean that they all became true

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disciples. What matters is not merely being mixed into the crowd and following along, but believing the word of Jesus with the heart, receiving the remission of sins, and actually following the Lord according to the will of God.

[Question] 3. In Matthew 8:2, with what faith did the leper come to Jesus?

The leper came to Jesus, worshiped Him, and confessed, *"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."* He believed that Jesus was the Son of God and the Savior, who could cleanse his incurable disease.

He did not hide his disease or think he could cure it himself. In those days a leper was treated as unclean and could hardly even draw near to people, but he acknowledged his miserable state as it was and came before Jesus. This represents the faith of the sinner who admits his sin and helplessness and asks grace of the Lord his Savior.

The words *"if You are willing"* were not an expression of doubt about Jesus' power. While assured that Jesus was fully able to make him clean, the leper did not force his own demand but entrusted the decision and the sovereignty to the Lord. He showed a humble faith that put the Lord's will before his own wish.

This leper, therefore, came with a faith that believed the deity and power of Jesus, acknowledged his own uncleanness, and relied wholly on the Lord's mercy and will. Such faith teaches that the sinner must abandon his own righteousness and effort and rely only on Jesus, who makes him perfectly clean.

[Question] 4. In Matthew 8:2, what kind of disease is leprosy spiritually, as the Scriptures speak of it?

Leprosy is a disease that spiritually represents the sin of man. This does not mean that a person who actually has leprosy is a greater sinner than others; it means that through the features of leprosy the Scriptures show the spiritual state of every human being, who is born with sin and lives committing sin continually.

As leprosy begins inside the body and with time appears outward on the skin, a person's sin also begins in the heart and is revealed in action. Man is born with the nature of sin as a descendant of Adam, and evil thoughts, greed, hatred, pride, lewdness, and lies keep coming out of his heart. A person can at first hide or restrain these sins, but as he lives on, he finally bears the fruit of sin in words and deeds.

Also, as leprosy dulls the senses so that a person does not properly feel the seriousness of an injury, the person accustomed to sin does not realize how fearful sin is even while committing it. Looking at his small good deeds and religious life, he thinks himself a comparatively decent person; but in the light of the word of God, man is like one diseased with sin from head to toe.

In the Old Testament the leper was judged unclean and had to stay outside the camp. This represents that a person with sin in his heart, however godly he may look religiously, cannot enter the holy kingdom of God. And just as the leper could not make himself clean by his own strength, the sinner also cannot completely wash the sin of his heart with good deeds, prayers of repentance, and religious efforts.

But Jesus wanted to make sinners clean. Jesus took on all the sins of mankind onto His own body through the baptism He

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received from John the Baptist, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, fully solving the disease of sin. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit is made clean from all sin and becomes one of God's people.

Leprosy, therefore, is a spiritual figure showing the nature of sin that man cannot cure by himself and the unclean state that sin brings. Just as the leper acknowledged his state, came to Jesus, and was made clean, the sinner also is made perfectly clean when he acknowledges that he is diseased with sin and believes the salvation Jesus has accomplished.

[Question] 5. In Matthew 8:1–4, what was Jesus' intention in healing the leper?

The first intention of Jesus in healing the leper was to pity him, who suffered from the disease and was abandoned by people, and actually to make him clean. People of that day counted the leper unclean and shrank from approaching him, but Jesus did not avoid him and touched him with His own hand. This shows the Lord's compassion, which does not turn away from sinners and the abandoned.

Second, it was to reveal that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who rules every disease and uncleanness. The leper believed that Jesus could make him clean if He was willing. When Jesus said, *"I am willing; be cleansed,"* his leprosy was immediately cleansed. This testifies that in the word of Jesus is the authority of God that makes people new and gives them life.

Third, it was to show through leprosy how fundamental human sin is and how impossible it is to solve by oneself. Spiritually, leprosy represents the state of man, who is born

with sin and keeps committing the sins that come out of his heart. Just as the leper could not cleanse his disease by his own strength, the sinner cannot fully wash the sin of his heart with good deeds, religious effort, and repeated prayers of repentance.

Fourth, it was to reveal the fact that God truly wants to make sinners clean. In the words *"I am willing"* is contained the will of God, who does not want the sinner to perish in sin and judgment but to be saved. When a sinner acknowledges his uncleanness and comes to the Lord, Jesus does not drive him away but makes him perfectly clean.

Jesus took on all the sins of mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, saving sinners from all sin. The event of cleansing the leper is a sign showing that Jesus is the Savior who makes the sinner's heart clean without blemish through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Fifth, it was to teach the posture of faith that the person who would receive the remission of sins must have. The leper did not hide his miserable state; he came before Jesus, worshiped Him, and relied on the Lord's power and will. In the same way, the sinner must acknowledge that he is wholly unclean before God and can only be judged, and, abandoning his own righteousness, come to Jesus the Savior.

Finally, Jesus told the healed man to show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, testifying to the fact that he had been made clean. In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner's sins passed to the unblemished offering through the laying on of hands, and atonement was made as the offering died in his place. The gift Moses commanded shows the principle of the transfer of sin and substitutionary sacrifice, and points to Jesus who would come as the true sacrificial

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offering to bear the sins of mankind.

The event of Jesus healing the leper, therefore, does not stop at curing one man's physical disease. It shows together the heart of God who pities sinners, the divine authority of Jesus, the reality of sin that man cannot solve by himself, and the will of salvation that makes the sinner perfectly clean through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

[Question] 6. In Matthew 8:3, what happened when Jesus put out His hand and touched the leper, saying, *"I am willing; be cleansed"*?

When Jesus put out His hand and touched the leper, saying, *"I am willing; be cleansed,"* immediately his leprosy was cleansed. The disease that human strength had long been unable to cure was completely healed by a single word of Jesus.

In those days the leper was counted unclean, so people shrank from touching him. But Jesus did not avoid him and touched him with His own hand. Uncleanness did not pass to Jesus; rather, by the holiness and power of Jesus the leper was made clean. This shows the love of the Lord, who pities sinners and the abandoned and wants to make them clean.

This event reveals that in the word of Jesus is absolute authority over disease. It also shows that even the person defiled by sin is made clean not by his own strength but by the will of Jesus and the word of salvation. The Lord is not One who wants the sinner to perish in sin, but One who wants him to be made clean from all sin and saved.

[Question] 7. In Matthew 8:4, what did Jesus command the man healed of leprosy?

Jesus first commanded him, *"See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."* Rather than hastily announcing the miracle to people, obeying the word Jesus directed and following the procedure the Law appointed came first.

Jesus then told him to go to the priest and show his body. For the leper to return to the community, he had to show himself to the priest and receive the judgment that he had been made clean. This was to have it officially confirmed that his disease was actually and completely healed.

He was also told to offer the gift Moses commanded and so to testify to the people. Jesus' command, then, was to tell no one first, to show himself to the priest, and to offer the gift prescribed in the Law, testifying that he had been made clean. Through this it was revealed that Jesus did not disregard the Law but fulfilled its demands, and that He is the One who made the leper perfectly clean.

[Question] 8. What were the position and role of the centurion who appears in Matthew 8:5?

A centurion was an officer commanding a unit in the Roman army; as the name shows, he held the position of leading about a hundred soldiers. The number of troops varied with the actual organization and situation of the unit, but he was the person responsible for giving orders over the common soldiers and managing the unit.

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The centurion received his superior's orders and passed them to his subordinates, and was responsible for the soldiers' training, discipline, and performance of duty. He was himself under the authority of his superiors while at the same time holding the authority to command the soldiers and servants under him. That is why in verse 9 he could say that he tells one to go and he goes, another to come and he comes, and his servant to do something and he does it.

The centurion of Matthew chapter 8 understood the authority of Jesus through this military chain of command. He believed that even if Jesus did not come to his house in person, if He commanded with His word, the disease would obey that authority and his servant would be healed. His position and experience, therefore, became an important background for the faith that believed the absolute authority in the word of Jesus.

[Question] 9. In Matthew 8:8, when Jesus said He would come and heal the servant, what did the centurion answer?

The centurion answered, *"Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."*

He did not put forward his position as an officer of the Roman army, but showed the humble attitude of counting himself unworthy even to receive Jesus into his house. At the same time he believed that even if Jesus did not meet the servant in person or lay His hand on him, if He only commanded with His word, the servant's disease would be healed.

In the centurion's answer, therefore, appear together the

humility that acknowledged his own lack and the faith that wholly trusted the word and authority of Jesus, which work beyond distance and circumstances.

[Question] 10. In Matthew 8:5–10, why did Jesus value the centurion's faith so highly?

The first reason Jesus valued the centurion's faith highly is that he did not see Jesus merely as a man good at healing diseases, but believed Him to be the Lord with absolute authority to rule disease by His word. He was confident that even if Jesus did not come all the way to his house, one word from Him would heal his servant.

Second, the centurion understood the authority of Jesus rightly through the military chain of command. Just as he obeyed his superior's orders and the soldiers and servants under him followed his orders, he believed that disease also could only obey the command of Jesus. He acknowledged that the word of Jesus is not mere exhortation but the command of God that is actually fulfilled.

Third, he did not put forward his position or merit. Though an officer of the Roman army, he confessed that he could not even bear to receive Jesus in his house. This was a humble faith that did not exalt himself but acknowledged the holiness and greatness of Jesus.

Fourth, he came to Jesus not for himself but for his suffering servant. In those days a servant held low status, yet the centurion did not turn away from his servant tormented by paralysis but pleaded for him, taking his pain as his own affair. Here appears a heart that pities others and seeks to save them.

Finally, the centurion, though a Gentile and not an Israelite,

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relied neither on visible signs nor on physical lineage but believed only the word of Jesus. He had a faith hard to find even among those who prided themselves on long following Jesus or knowing the Scriptures well. Therefore Jesus marveled at his faith and valued it highly, saying He had not found such great faith from anyone in Israel.

The centurion's faith shows that true faith is receiving the word of Jesus more surely than one's own thoughts and conditions. The word of God is not fulfilled only after a person understands it or confirms it with his eyes; believing that it is surely fulfilled because God has spoken it—this is the faith that relies on the word.

[Question] 11. In Matthew 8:10, how did Jesus regard the centurion's faith?

When Jesus heard the centurion's words, He marveled at his faith. And He said to those who followed, *"Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"*—praising his faith greatly.

Though the centurion was a Gentile, he believed that Jesus held the authority of God. He did not think the disease would be healed only if Jesus came to his house in person and laid His hand on the servant. As a superior's command is carried out in the army, he believed that if Jesus only commanded with His word, the disease also would obey that word.

What Jesus marveled at was that the centurion believed the word and authority of Jesus themselves, without leaning on visible miracles or his own experience. This shows the fact that true faith does not come from nationality or religious status but from knowing who Jesus is and receiving His word as it is.

[Question] 12. According to Matthew 8:11, what kind of faith does a person who will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven have?

The person who, like the centurion, does not put forward his own qualifications and merits but believes the word of Jesus and His saving authority as they are will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said that many will come from east and west and sit down in the kingdom of heaven. This means that not only Jews but people among all the nations of the world who believe the word of God will receive salvation.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were not people who entered the kingdom of God because their fleshly deeds were perfect; they were people who believed the promise God gave. Likewise today, the person who does not rely on his good deeds and religious zeal but believes the promise of salvation God fulfilled through Jesus Christ comes to sit in the same place of faith with them.

Jesus took on all the sins of the world onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, carried those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, overcoming the power of death. The person who receives this gospel of the water and the Spirit as God's true word of salvation and is washed of all the sins of his heart is the person who has obtained the righteousness of God by faith.

The standard for entering the kingdom of heaven, therefore, does not lie in whether one is a physical descendant of Abraham, how long one has led a religious life, or how many good deeds one has done. Just as the centurion believed that his servant would be healed by the word of Jesus alone, the person

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who believes the salvation God has fulfilled just as the word says enters the kingdom of heaven. Whoever has such faith, regardless of nation and status, comes to enjoy the everlasting blessing of the kingdom of God together with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[Question] 13. According to Matthew 8:13, how are the centurion's faith and the healing of his servant connected?

Jesus said to the centurion, *"Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you,"* and at that very hour his servant was healed. The work of healing was accomplished exactly as the centurion believed the word and authority of Jesus.

The centurion believed that even if Jesus did not come to his house and lay His hand on the servant, one command of His word would heal him. Jesus answered this faith and healed the far-off servant by His word alone. This shows that time, distance, and disease cannot limit the authority of Jesus.

Yet it was not that some independent power in the centurion's own faith healed the servant. The One who healed the disease was Jesus, and the centurion's faith was the channel that relied on Jesus' power and word. This event shows, therefore, that true faith is not holding fast to self-conviction but trusting Jesus, who is able to accomplish, and His word.

[Question] 14. In Matthew 8:14–15, to whom did Jesus do what at Peter's house?

Jesus entered Peter's house and saw Peter's mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. When Jesus touched her hand, the fever left her at once.

Peter's mother-in-law rose from her sickness and served Jesus. This shows that her disease was not lightened for a moment but healed so completely that she could rise at once and serve. It also shows the figure of a person healed by the Lord's grace serving the Lord with a thankful heart.

[Question] 15. According to Matthew 8:16, when did people bring the demon-possessed to Jesus?

The time when people brought the demon-possessed to Jesus was after the day had grown dark. The Gospel of Matthew records, *"When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed."*

Even after dark, people brought many demon-possessed and sick people to Jesus. Jesus did not turn them away; He cast out the demons with His word and healed the sick.

[Question] 16. According to Matthew 8:17, of which word was Jesus' casting out demons and healing the sick the fulfillment?

Jesus' casting out the demons and healing the sick was the fulfillment of the word spoken through the prophet Isaiah: *"He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."*

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This prophecy shows that the Messiah to come would not turn away from human weakness and suffering but take them on Himself. That Jesus cast out demons with His word and healed the sick testifies that He is the very Messiah Isaiah prophesied, the One who would save people from sin, the curse, and the power of Satan.

This healing, therefore, shows the compassion and divine authority of Jesus, and at the same time reveals that the ministry of the Savior, who came to bear all the sins of mankind and the weakness they bring, was being accomplished according to prophecy.

[Question] 17. In Matthew 8:18, seeing the multitudes around Him, where did Jesus command the disciples to go?

Seeing the multitudes surrounding Him, Jesus commanded the disciples to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The Scriptures record, *"And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side."*

Following this command, Jesus and the disciples crossed the sea by boat, and on the way they met a great tempest. Afterward Jesus reached the region of Gadara on the other side, met the demon-possessed men, and released them from the power of the evil spirits.

[Question] 18. In Matthew 8:19, who stepped forward saying he would follow Jesus anywhere?

The one who came to Jesus and said he would follow Him

wherever He went was a scribe. He said to Jesus, *"Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."*

A scribe was a religious intellectual who studied and taught the Scriptures and the Law. Seeing Jesus' authoritative words and many works of power, he volunteered to follow Him; but Jesus first told him that the way of following the Lord may bring no comfort of the flesh or worldly guarantee.

[Question] 19. In Matthew 8:20, what did Jesus say to the scribe who would follow Him?

Jesus said to that scribe, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

This shows that Jesus did not live on this earth with the aim of gaining fleshly ease and riches, but set His whole heart on accomplishing the saving work the Father had entrusted to Him. It also shows that following Jesus does not necessarily bring a comfortable life and worldly success.

These words, therefore, made the scribe examine his fleshly expectations and purposes and consider whether he was ready to follow the Lord to the end even through hardship and sacrifice. The true disciple does not first think what he will gain through the Lord, but follows Jesus with a heart that offers himself for the will of God and the work of saving souls.

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[Question] 20. In Matthew 8:21–22, what did Jesus say to the disciple who asked to bury his father first?

When a disciple said, *"Lord, let me first go and bury my father,"* Jesus said, *"Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."*

Here the former, *"the dead,"* refers to those who are alive in the flesh but spiritually dead, not yet having received the remission of sins, and the latter, *"their own dead,"* refers to those physically dead. Jesus taught that the people of the world can handle the affairs that belong to the world, but the disciple who has received the Lord's call must give priority to the work of saving souls.

These words do not mean that holding a parent's funeral or fulfilling family responsibility is unconditionally wrong. Nor did He abolish God's word to honor one's parents. The heart of the matter lies in what to do *"first."* It means that a person must not keep pushing back the Lord's call by putting forward the many affairs of the world and the circumstances of the flesh.

Jesus, therefore, told that disciple to put the Lord's call before his own circumstances and plans, and to follow Him for the work of life God had entrusted. The true disciple must not let his heart be taken by the affairs of the world, but make the will of God and the preaching of the gospel the most important purpose of his life.

[Question] 21. In Matthew 8:23–25, what did Jesus and the disciples meet while crossing by boat?

While Jesus boarded the boat and the disciples followed,

crossing the sea, suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea. The waves grew fierce enough to cover the boat, and it was a perilous situation in which the boat could sink.

At that time Jesus was asleep in the boat. The disciples, seeing the tempest, were greatly afraid and came to Jesus, waking Him and crying out, *"Lord, save us! We are perishing!"*

This event shows that even while following the command of Jesus, the disciples could meet great hardship. But Jesus was with them in their boat, and before a danger they could not solve by their own strength, the disciples finally asked Jesus for salvation.

[Question] 22. In Matthew 8:26–27, what did Jesus say to the fearful disciples, and what did He do?

To the disciples who feared at the sight of the tempest, Jesus said, *"Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?"* Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and the fierce tempest became perfectly calm.

The disciples were following Jesus and even asked the Lord for salvation at the moment of danger, but they did not fully believe who Jesus is. They saw the great waves and the danger of death before their eyes as greater than the power of Jesus. Because they thought they could only die even though Jesus was in the same boat with them, the Lord rebuked them as people of little faith.

That Jesus was asleep does not mean He did not know the disciples' danger or was not caring for them. Jesus revealed and taught whom the disciples should rely on in hardship, and whether they believed that He is God, who rules all things. Through this the disciples learned that Jesus is not only One

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who heals diseases but the Creator, who rules even the natural world.

When Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea, they immediately became perfectly calm. Those who saw it marveled, saying, *"Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"* That the winds and the sea obeyed the word of Jesus shows that He is the Son of God the Father, the almighty God who created and rules the universe and all things.

This event teaches that hardships like the tempest can also strike the saints who follow the Lord and the church of God. Just as a great tempest arose against the boat where Jesus was, being saved does not mean that no problem arises in life and in the work of the gospel. What matters is that when hardship strikes, we are not seized only by human means and fear but ask help of the Lord, who rules all things.

The saints, therefore, must look ahead to the difficulties that can arise in personal life and health, in the work of the church and the preaching of the gospel, prepare for them, and pray to God. We must not only pray while neglecting the preparation we should make, nor rely only on human preparation without asking the Lord's help. We must do the needed preparation and effort in faith, while entrusting the solution and protection to the almighty Lord. Through this process the saints experience the Lord's help and come to believe in Jesus more deeply, not only as Savior but as their Shepherd, Protector, and almighty God.

[Question] 23. According to Matthew 8:28, what happened when Jesus reached the region of Gadara?

When Jesus reached the region of Gadara across the sea, two demon-possessed men came out from among the tombs and met Him.

Seized by demons, they were so fierce that no one could pass that way. People could hardly control them or come near them, and they were living not in the dwellings of the living but among the tombs where the dead were laid.

Yet even such men, seized by evil spirits, came to stand before Jesus. This meeting is the beginning of the event showing that even the power of demons, which human strength cannot restrain, can only submit before the authority of Jesus, and that Jesus is the One who releases them from the evil spirits.

[Question] 24. In Matthew 8:28, in what state were the two demon-possessed men?

The two demon-possessed men were living among the tombs. That they stayed in the dwelling place of the dead, unable to live a normal life with people, shows that their lives were captive to the powers of death and darkness.

They were so exceedingly fierce that no one could pass that way. Under the rule of evil spirits, they could not normally govern their own hearts and behavior, and they were in a state of bringing fear and harm to others. Human strength could neither control nor cure them.

Outwardly they were two men, but in reality they were

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under the rule of the demons that had entered them. They were not people living freely by their own will, but in the miserable state of having body and heart taken by evil spirits and being used as tools of Satan.

Spiritually this figure shows the state of man living apart from God under the rule of sin and Satan. Though a person thinks himself free, if he does not believe the true gospel he can be dragged by sin, desire, and the delusions of evil spirits down the road of death. But even this state, which human strength cannot solve, is set free by the authority of Jesus when a person meets Him.

[Question] 25. In Matthew 8:29, what did the demon-possessed men cry out when they met Jesus?

When the demon-possessed men met Jesus, they cried out, *"What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"*

These words show that the demons within them recognized that Jesus is the Son of God. People had not yet fully realized who Jesus was, but the demons knew His identity and authority and feared Him.

The demons also knew that the time of their coming judgment was appointed. So they asked whether Jesus had come to judge and torment them before that time arrived. This reveals that Satan and the demons also are under the authority of Jesus and must in the end receive the judgment of God.

[Question] 26. In Matthew 8:30–32, after hearing the demons' plea, how did Jesus cast them out?

A herd of many swine happened to be feeding at a distance, and the demons begged Jesus that, if He would cast them out, He let them go into the herd of swine.

When Jesus commanded the demons, *"Go,"* they came out of the two men and entered the herd of swine. Jesus used no complicated rite or human method; He cast out the demons only by the authority of His word. The demons could not act at will without Jesus' permission and command.

When the demons entered, the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea and perished in the water. This shows that the nature of demons lies not in giving life but in destroying and killing. At the same time it reveals that even the evil spirits that human strength could not drive out could only obey at once the single command of Jesus, the Son of God.

[Question] 27. In Matthew 8:33–34, what did the swineherds who fled report to the people of the city?

Those who kept the swine, seeing the herd rush into the sea and perish, fled into the city. They told the people of the city everything they had witnessed and what had happened to the two demon-possessed men. That is, they reported the fact that Jesus had cast out the demons, that those demons had entered the herd of swine, and that the whole herd had died in the sea.

Hearing this news, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. But instead of rejoicing that the demon-possessed men had been released from the evil spirits and welcoming Jesus, they

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begged Him to leave their region. This shows that they thought more of the material loss of the herd of swine than of the salvation of souls.

[Question] 28. In Matthew 8:34, what did the people of the region of Gadara beg when they saw Jesus?

The people of the whole city of the region of Gadara came out to meet Jesus, but they begged Him to depart from their region. They did not ask Him to stay and heal more of their sick and demon-possessed.

The release of the two demon-possessed men from the evil spirits was a thing to rejoice over, but the people thought more of the material loss of the whole herd of swine. Fearing that greater loss would come to their property and livelihood if Jesus remained in their region, they wanted Him to leave.

This figure shows the heart of man, which loves the riches and profit of the flesh more than the salvation of the soul. If a person meets Jesus and yet pushes the Lord away, unwilling to give up his possessions and desires, he ends up refusing the grace of salvation before his very eyes, like the people of Gadara. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The person who has received the remission of sins has the testimony in the word

< Matthew 8:1-4 >

"When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, 'See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'"

The leper represents the sinner who cannot become clean by his own strength

When Jesus came down from the mountain, a leper came before the Lord. In those days a leper had to live apart from other people, and he could not declare his own body clean at will. Even if his disease seemed to have been healed, he had to show his body to the priest and receive the verdict. This man did not hide his disease or say that he would cure himself. Bowing before Jesus, he confessed, *"Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean" (Matthew 8:2).*

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This leprosy shows spiritually the sin that is inside man. A person is born with sin, but at first he does not fully know his own nature. Only as he grows up and sees evil thoughts, covetousness, lewdness, hatred, and pride coming out of his heart does he realize that he is a person with the disease of sin. Sin is not just a few wrongs revealed on the outside; it is the fundamental disease that keeps producing evil from deep within the human heart.

Jesus made clear what comes out of the heart of man. He said, *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:21–23)*. Sin is not a few habits that the environment has put into a person. Because evil comes out of a heart already born a sinner, no one can become clean by his own resolution alone.

A leper does not lose his disease by washing his skin and putting on fine clothes. In the same way, the sins of the heart do not disappear on their own just because a sinner attends worship services, fasts, does good deeds, and repeats prayers of repentance. One may adorn his outward appearance religiously, but he cannot erase with his own works the sins written on the tablet of his heart and in God's Book of Judgment. He must know that he is a complete sinner and come before the Savior who can make him wholly clean.

The Lord wants to make sinners clean

The leper believed that Jesus had the power to make him clean. He only asked whether the Lord was willing. Then Jesus

put out His hand and touched him, saying, *"I am willing; be cleansed."* Under the Law, whoever touched an unclean person became unclean himself, but Jesus was not defiled even when He laid His hand on the leper. Rather, the Lord's cleanness and the authority of life came upon that man, and the disease left him immediately.

God does not delight in a sinner perishing in sin and condemnation. He wants to cleanse people from sin and make them His own people. That is why He sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to this earth. Jesus did not merely pity sinners from afar; He did the actual work of salvation, taking the sins of sinners onto His own body through the baptism He received from John and receiving the judgment of those sins in their place.

Therefore salvation is not a matter of a sinner piling up merits to change God's mind. God first purposed to save sinners and accomplished that purpose through His Son. God's will to save comes before our desire to be saved, and what Jesus Christ has done comes before our works. Faith is accepting, just as the word says, this fact that God has accomplished.

When the Lord said, *"Be cleansed,"* the leprosy was not healed only halfway. It is written, *"Immediately his leprosy was cleansed" (Matthew 8:3)*. The remission of sins received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is just like this. If God has removed all sin, there is no sin in the heart of the one who believes. The flesh is still weak and commits wrongs, but it is not that some sin Jesus Christ did not bear remains and makes us sinners again.

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The shadow of salvation seen in the sacrificial law of the Old Testament

After healing the disease, Jesus said, *"Go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them" (Matthew 8:4).* The Lord was not merely telling him to get a certificate of health from the priest. He had him testify to what the gift appointed through Moses signified, and how the salvation that gift pointed to would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Leviticus records the method of the burnt offering in this way: *"If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting" (Leviticus 1:3–5).*

The sinner first had to lay his hands on the head of the unblemished sacrificial offering. The laying on of hands means that the sinner's sins passed onto the sacrificial offering. After the sins had passed on, that offering had to die and shed its blood, for the wages of sin is death. The sinner lived, but the offering that had received his sins was judged in his place. God did not declare sin gone without any ground; He justly saved sinners through the transfer of sin and the judgment of blood.

We must know this order clearly. It is not that the sin passed onto the offering belatedly because the offering died. Because sin was first transferred onto the offering through the laying on of hands, the offering died in the sinner's place. In the same way,

if we speak of the Cross of Jesus while leaving out when and how sin passed onto Him, we cannot fully explain the meaning of the atonement.

Remember the sacrificial law of the Day of Atonement that remitted a whole year of sins

The people of Israel offered sacrificial offerings for the sins they committed each day, but the daily sacrifices alone could not deal with all the sins of a whole year. So God appointed the Day of Atonement once a year and had the high priest, representing the whole congregation, pass all their sins onto the sacrificial offering.

The Scriptures say, *"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:21–22).*

Here it is recorded that *"all the iniquities"* and *"all their transgressions, concerning all their sins" (Leviticus 16:21)* were put on the head of the goat. When the high priest laid both his hands on it, a whole year of the sins of all Israel was transferred onto that goat. So the goat went out into the wilderness bearing the sins of the people. Sin did not vanish in feelings or thoughts; it actually passed onto the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands of the representative appointed by God.

But the sacrifices of the Old Testament had to be repeated year after year. It says, *"For the law, having a shadow of the*

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good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect" (Hebrews 10:1). The sacrifice of animals was a shadow showing beforehand Jesus Christ who was to come and the everlasting atonement He would accomplish once for all.

The ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus that became the substance of the shadow

The last High Priest of the Old Testament, the man sent as the representative of all mankind, is John the Baptist. When Jesus turned thirty, He went to the Jordan River and was baptized by John the Baptist. The sinless Jesus did not receive baptism because He needed the baptism of repentance. Just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament received sins through the laying on of hands, He received baptism in order to take all the sins of all mankind onto His own body and bear them. Jesus carried the sins He had thus received, was judged on the Cross, died shedding His blood, and completed our salvation by rising from death.

To John, who tried to prevent Him, Jesus spoke as it is written: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).* Here, *"all righteousness"* means the right work of God who, to make sinners live as sinless people, transferred all sins onto the sinless Jesus, justly judged Jesus who bore those sins on the Cross so that He died shedding His blood, and completed salvation by raising Him from death.

Through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, all the sins from Adam to the last person of this world were

transferred onto Jesus' body. Jesus became the Lamb of God who bore those sins and went to the Cross. On the Cross He received God's judgment in our place and died shedding His blood, and by rising from death in three days He overcame sin and death and completed our salvation. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has fulfilled.

John the Baptist testified the day after Jesus was baptized by him: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29)* Why does Jesus take away the sin of the world? Because He had received that sin through the baptism He received from John the Baptist just before. And why did He die on the Cross shedding His blood? To pay the price of the sins He had received in our place. Why did He rise from death? To overcome sin and death and give everlasting life to us who believe.

The righteousness of God is the opposite of man's righteousness

Man's righteousness puts forward the works and merits of having lived better than others. But the righteousness of God cannot be made by sinners themselves. The righteousness of God is the work by which God transferred sins onto His Son through John the Baptist, and the Son bore those sins and was judged in our place on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and rose from death, saving sinners completely.

Paul said, *"But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference" (Romans*

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3:21–22). This righteousness is the righteousness the Law and the Prophets testified to beforehand. The laying on of hands and the blood of Leviticus, and the bearing and the judgment Isaiah prophesied, were actually fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Therefore we must not add our own righteousness in order to receive the remission of sins. If Jesus received all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and completed salvation by rising from death, then we must believe this fact. To set up our own prayers of repentance and good deeds as another way of washing away sin is to refuse to submit to the righteousness of God and to establish our own righteousness.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not righteous because his works are perfect. He is righteous because God moved all sins onto Jesus Christ, judged them, and removed them completely. Even with shortcomings in the flesh, he has no sin in his heart, not because he evaluates himself favorably, but because he believes God's verdict of salvation just as the word says.

Testify to the remission of sins with the written word

Jesus told the man healed of leprosy to offer the gift Moses commanded *"as a testimony to them."* The person who has received the remission of sins must also have a testimony. But that testimony is not a vision seen while praying, a sensation felt in the body, or a mood that suddenly improved. Feelings and circumstances change, but the word of God does not change.

We must be able to answer with the word. Where did my sins

go? They were transferred onto the body of Jesus through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Where was the price of those sins paid? It was paid in full when Jesus was judged in our place on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood. Did it end with death? No. Jesus rose from death and completed our salvation forever.

The Scriptures say, *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14)*. If we have been perfected forever, then not only today's sins but even the sins our flesh will commit tomorrow were all transferred to Jesus Christ and judged. Otherwise the word *"forever"* could not stand.

Of course, when the righteous who have received the remission of sins do wrong, they must admit it before God and turn back through the word. If they have caused loss to a brother, they must apologize and set it right. But they do not receive the remission of sins again because they have done so. It is the person who has already received the everlasting remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit admitting his wrong and walking in the light.

The person who has been cleansed testifies to the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The man healed of leprosy had to show the priest that his body had become clean. The person who has received the remission of sins must also testify, not boasting of himself, but of how Jesus Christ made him clean. He must not say, "I became clean because I prayed much," but, "Jesus removed all my sins in this way."

The most beautiful news is the news that a sinner has become

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a sinless righteous person by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and completed salvation by rising from death. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart has no sin before God and is a child who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Does your remission of sins have the testimony of the word? If you say you believe in the Cross and yet sin remains in your heart, you must look again at when your sins were transferred onto Jesus. If you are trying to erase your sins every day with prayers of repentance, hear again the everlasting atonement Jesus Christ accomplished once for all. Believe that, just as the gift of Moses pointed out, Jesus received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and completed the everlasting atonement by rising from death.

The Lord not only can make sinners clean; He wants to make them clean. And He has already accomplished that work perfectly through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now do not look at your own works, but believe the written word. After receiving the remission of sins, keep the testimony in your heart, and clearly preach this gospel that Jesus Christ has completed to the souls still bound to sin and condemnation. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The true life of faith that believes and follows just as the word says

< Matthew 8:1-13 >

"When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, 'See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.' Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

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But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.' And his servant was healed that same hour."

In today's Scripture passage there are two paragraphs of the word. One is the ministry in which Jesus healed the leper. The other is the word in which He healed the sickness of the centurion's servant. Let us first look together at the words of verses 1 through 4.

The Lord's will in making the leper clean

"When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, 'See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'" (Matthew 8:1–4).

This word certainly shows the power of Jesus. Jesus met the leper and healed him. When the Lord said that He was willing and told him to be cleansed, he was cleansed immediately. And Jesus told him only to go show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.

But this word does not mean that a believer in Jesus should pray much, work miracles, and become a man of prayer and power who heals lepers. Rather, it means that we should meet

the people of this world who carry sin like leprosy and testify to them the truth spoken in the Old Testament. In the sacrificial law found in Leviticus and the Books of the Law, the Lord is showing us the fact that one received the remission of sins by laying his hands on the sacrificial offering, passing his sins onto it, and offering it as a sin offering.

Leprosy shows us our sins

What the Lord is speaking of here is not power. Where is the person who can heal a leper by human strength? That is nothing but imitation. Jesus does not want some display of power from us. In the Scriptures leprosy points to sin.

It is said that for the first three years leprosy passes without even the person himself knowing it, for the next three years only he himself knows it, and after one more year it is revealed even to others. In seven years it becomes known at last to the whole world. Our sins are like this too. When a person is born, he does not know that he is a sinner. Then, passing through middle school and high school, he comes to realize: I am a person who commits many sins; there is sin inside me; there is a desire in me that wants to commit sin. When he passes twenty and reaches thirty, he realizes keenly: I am a complete sinner; I must receive the remission of sins.

So he meets the Lord and comes to know that the Lord was the very sacrificial offering spoken of in the sacrificial law prophesied in the Old Testament. Jesus came to save His people from their sins. In the year He turned thirty He received baptism from John. With that baptism He took on all the sins of the world, died on the Cross, rose again, and saved us. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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If we truly realize that we are spiritual lepers and truly want to come before the Lord, receive the remission of sins, and become clean, we must believe in Jesus who became the gift of Moses, that is, the sacrificial offering that Moses testified to. The Lord is telling us to testify to people that we have been saved by believing in that Jesus who came to this earth and saved us with the water and the blood.

Only speak a word: the faith of the centurion

Then from verse 5 through verse 10 the centurion appears. He was a Roman soldier. His servant lay at home paralyzed, dying. The centurion was in such distress over this that when he heard Jesus was coming, he came before Jesus and pleaded with Him to heal his servant. Hearing him, Jesus said that He would come and heal him.

But the centurion answered, *"Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it" (Matthew 8:8–9).*

He was saying that he was not worthy to have Jesus come to his house in person, so would the Lord only speak a word. If the Lord would just say this one word, Let your servant's sickness be healed, his servant would be healed. When Jesus heard this, He marveled greatly. Is there anyone with such good faith as this? He said that though He had gone throughout Israel in every direction, He had not found such great faith.

Jesus said to the centurion, *"Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you. And his servant was healed*

that same hour." This word also has something to teach us. Paralysis, too, is a disease. When a person is born a sinner, he cannot live virtuously even though he wants to. That is nothing more than a wish. For a sinner to try to become righteous by himself is like hoping that his body will not be harmed while he keeps overeating—it is something that cannot come true.

When a person is born a sinner, he cannot help committing sin. So the disease of sin deepens, and he is a being who can only go to hell by himself. The centurion pleaded for his servant's sickness to be healed, and to be healed by the word of Jesus alone. When Jesus said, Let it be done for you as you have believed, the servant's sickness was truly healed.

Do not seek power; follow the word

So the point of this word is this: do not try, while believing in Jesus, to meet some powerful minister and be healed through the laying on of his hands. Do not strive, by praying much, to receive the gift of healing diseases or the gift of casting out demons. Believe in Jesus following the word, have your own problem of sin resolved, preach the gospel to others, and become a person who saves others.

We look at the Scriptures far too superficially. So people want to do forty-day fasting prayers to receive the gift and power of healing and become healers. But Jesus does not want us to become such people.

The person Jesus wants is a person like the centurion, the person who asks, saying, Only speak a word. He wants us to look at the written word and, by believing that word, be healed of diseases, receive the remission of sins, solve the problem of others' sins, know what the will of God is, live according to that

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will, and please God.

Jesus does not want us to become workers of miracles. Rather, He wants us to become people who follow the word like the centurion: Only speak a word; I believe that if You only speak, it will be done according to Your word. If we only believe the written word, it is fulfilled just as the word says.

If we believe the word, it is fulfilled just as the word says

Both the leper and the paralytic here were healed just as Jesus spoke. Jesus came to this earth, took over our sins once for all with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, hung on the Cross, died shedding His blood, rose again, and became our Savior. The words of today's passage testify to this fact. The baptism Jesus received from John is recorded in Matthew chapter 3, verses 13 through 17, and also in Mark, Luke, and John—in all the Gospels.

By seeing the word, believing the word, and holding fast to the word, we receive the remission of sins and the power Jesus gives. And we live according to the Lord's will and live as people of God. This is also why the Lord healed the sick while He was on this earth: to teach us this.

In particular, this leper confessed, saying that if the Lord was willing, He could make him clean. When the Lord told him to be cleansed, he was cleansed immediately. The power and works that appeared when the Lord was on this earth did not exist only then. Even now, if we hold fast to the word and believe, it is fulfilled for us just as this word says.

The remission of sins is fulfilled in our hearts, the desires of our hearts are fulfilled, and we also receive the strength to live

as God's people and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The words of today's passage show us exactly this.

Then what about today? Today the Korean church and Christianity all over the world each try to become like Jesus. They try to become miracle-workers who heal leprosy by the laying on of hands and heal paralysis by the laying on of hands. But in doing so they have all failed. Since it does not work, things go so far that they lay a hand on the head of the person who has come forward for the laying on of hands and give a little push to make him fall backward. That is nothing but hypnotism. How many people imitate as if they had received power!

That is not what Jesus desires. Besides church ministers, in this world there are also monks in Buddhist temples, people who perform feats of strength, people who claim to breathe energy into you, and shamans. When they too lay their hands on someone's head and say strange words, things happen where a demon goes out. How often such things happen!

But though the demon goes out, the sins of that heart remain as they are. Where there is sin, there is no healing. Whether paralysis or leprosy, every disease came because of sin. Because of sin, diseases arise, misfortunes strike this world, hardship and affliction come, and death also came. Therefore, if the problem of sin is solved, everything else is solved as well.

When people believe in Jesus and are born again, though it differs from person to person, the heart becomes at ease. Since the heart is at ease, the body also becomes healthy. I, too, am in much better health than when I first met the Lord. The reason is that my heart has become at ease. Many illnesses have also disappeared. What the Lord is saying here in Matthew chapter 8 is to lead the life of faith by the word. Jesus has now gone up to Heaven, invisible to our eyes. But He has given us this word, and He has given the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Therefore, if

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we know that Jesus has spoken to us directly and hold fast to the word and believe, we become people who receive the remission of sins, who can follow the Lord, and who can also do works of power. This is what matters.

The baptism Jesus received from John is missing from the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed

Next year it will be 1,700 years since the Nicene Creed was drawn up and proclaimed. The Nicene Creed was announced in A.D. 325. And the Apostles' Creed that we always confess says, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate." But the baptism Jesus received from John is missing from it.

From that time until now, for 1,700 years, people have believed that way. They have not believed just as the word says, but only according to the Apostles' Creed. But the Apostles believed in the baptism Jesus received from John together with the blood of the Cross. They did not believe only in the blood of the Cross with Jesus' baptism left out.

The Scriptures say this: *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*. The Lord received baptism from John and bore our sins, hung on the Cross and died for me, and rose from death and became my Savior. Since I believe this gospel, how could my conscience be filthy? What is it that makes our clean conscience go seeking toward God? It is the very baptism Jesus received from John when He came to this

earth. Because Jesus received baptism, He died on the Cross, rose again, and became our Savior.

Even the Reformers did not fully follow the word

Therefore we must lead our life of faith by the word. Martin Luther led the Reformation from the front, but he was originally a Catholic priest and a professor of theology. As a man who had made and taught doctrines, nothing about him was changed at the root. He believed exactly like the Catholics, only striving to live more uprightly than they did. It was not that he carried out the Reformation because Catholicism did not believe just as the word says, and he came out of it to follow the word fully.

Then what about Calvin? He was a man of the 1500s. In that age Catholicism did not hesitate to hold religious trials and put people to death. Since there was no money to build cathedrals, they made and sold indulgences. They said that if you bought this ticket, the souls of your ancestors would come up from hell to purgatory, and if you bought many expensive ones, they could go up even to Heaven.

That is not scriptural. If that were true, only the rich would go to Heaven. They were saying things so far removed from the word, and that was not right. Where the word goes, we must go; where the word stops, we must stop. That was the faith the Reformers put forward. But they themselves did not fully follow the word.

They came out of Catholicism and became Protestants. The word Protestant means those who protest. It means those who, sick of the syncretism of Catholicism, said, I refuse, and came out in protest. But they only protested; after coming out, they did not follow the word.

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Beginning from them, that stream has continued for 1,700 years. Next year is the year that marks those 1,700 years. It has been roughly 507 years since the Reformation took place. You may think the Reformation was something from very long ago, but Luther and Calvin were people of roughly five hundred years ago.

We too believe in this age. But we know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we know the word, and we are holding fast to the word and following the Lord. The countless Catholics and Protestants of this world, however, have thrown the word away and have preached and believed the theological ideas they themselves made.

That is why Christianity today has become rotten through and through. So when someone says he is a Christian, many people dislike him. Even you, if you go somewhere and say you are a Christian, the other person may dislike it in his heart. Therefore, rather than calling ourselves Christians with words, it is better to live rightly before God. When people see our lives and feel that there is something different about us, they too can accept the gospel when it is preached and believe in Jesus together with us and receive salvation.

Therefore, whether it is the word the Scriptures speak to the centurion or the word spoken to the leper, the point is one: follow the word. The words the Lord speaks are the word of God, so if we believe them, hold fast to them, and follow them, we taste miracles, taste the remission of sins, and receive blessings. True life of faith, then, is holding the word just as it is, believing it, and following it. This is exactly what the Lord has spoken to us. In worship services, too, the word must be preached. Even without someone up front stressing, Let us live kindly, you all do that on your own. Even without being told not to sin, we do not want to sin, and yet we sin because we are weak.

The Law makes us realize sin and leads us to the Savior

In Romans chapter 3, verse 20 Paul said, *"By the law is the knowledge of sin."* The word of God's Law makes us realize and know our sins. The Law was not given for us to keep; it was given to make us realize and know sin. Therefore, if we have realized our sins through the Law, we should come to Jesus and receive salvation through faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross.

Then what does it mean that we were born sinners through the transgression of Adam and Eve? What does it mean when God says that because we commit sins, He sends us to hell for those sins? All of us are the descendants of Adam. Just as through one man's transgression all became sinners, because we are the descendants of the couple Adam and Eve, we too were born into this earth with sin through their transgression.

So we became sinners automatically. Then what is it to realize sin through the Law, and what is the remission of sins? Born as descendants of Adam, we are sinners, beings who can only go to hell. But God, through the word of the Law, makes us know our sins; and in order to save us from sin and deliver us from sin through faith in Jesus, He came to this earth as our Savior and Deliverer. By believing in that Jesus Christ we are delivered from sin.

We must know this. If you do not know the Scriptures, it is truly frustrating. Look at the Old Testament: when they break the Law, He strikes them and lets them be taken away as captives. Seeing that, one comes to think, What a fearful God! But look at the New Testament: Jesus has removed all sins, so one comes to think, What a good God! So if you do not know the Scriptures, you become confused.

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Jesus came to deliver us from the devil. Since Satan the devil made Adam and Eve commit sin, Jesus came to remove that sin. So through the word of the Law He makes us realize and know our sins; and all the sins we have committed and all the sins we carry, Jesus bore with the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross and died, and rose again, delivering us from sin, from death, and from the curse. So Jesus is our Savior and our Deliverer. But this does not mean that, having received salvation, we may sin as we please. When we receive salvation, the Holy Spirit comes upon us. Therefore, when we live centered on the word of God and follow the word, the will of God is fulfilled through us.

How amazing this is! Do you understand this word? Do you understand why God gave the Law? It is to deliver you from sin. If He had not given the Law, we, being Gentiles and not the people of Israel, would not have known the commands of God. It is a plain fact that we were born sinners, for all people are the descendants of Adam. But to know sin we must know God's commands. God commanded, Do this, and, Do not do that; yet we do what He told us not to do and fail to do what He told us to do, so we are sinners. The wages of sin is death, so we deserve to go to hell. But to that sinner the Savior has come.

The One who would save His people from their sins has come. He received baptism from John and took over our sins, and He received the judgment for us. Thus Jesus became our Savior.

True faith believes the word, not an image

He is our Creator, our Savior, our Shepherd, and our God. Though He is invisible to our eyes, we receive salvation by

believing the words He has spoken. Therefore this word of the Scriptures is the word of life.

The person who does not believe just as the word says is neither leading a life of faith nor truly believing. In religion people hang up a portrait and believe. But who has ever seen Jesus with his eyes? Some draw Jesus as a very handsome figure, and some draw Him as a shabby figure. But according to the word of the Scriptures, Jesus was not handsome in outward appearance. The Scriptures say that there is no beauty that we should desire Him. When people saw Jesus, He was not so handsome as to charm them.

But when we hear His words, we are drawn into those words. Believing by looking at an image is not faith. Looking at the word and accepting and believing that word just as it is—this is truly believing in God. We can sum it up this way.

What is it to believe in Jesus? Believing and following the word is believing in Jesus. It is believing in God revealed in the word, and believing in Jesus who, in the word, did the saving work of removing our sins. By believing in that Jesus who removed our sins for us, we have become those who believe that He is our Savior, and we have become the saved. Therefore the life of faith must be centered on the word.

A minister standing up front dressed in style, saying stylish things and throwing out amusing stories—that is not preaching Jesus. Preaching Jesus is preaching clearly within this word. What is certain is that a work took place for both of these people who believed the words He spoke.

We too must open the Scriptures and read the words of Jesus. When we read the word in worship services as well, we realize that we too were lepers and Jesus healed our leprosy. We too were in agony because of sin like the centurion's servant, and Jesus said, Let it be done for you as you have believed. The

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centurion believed, saying, I believe it will be fulfilled just as the word says, and went forward, and his servant was completely healed.

We also now believe the word of Jesus just as it is, and just as we believed, our sins have disappeared. I find this truly marvelous. Reading exactly what is written in this word, I realized, So this is what this word means, and I held fast to the word and believed it, and my sins disappeared. That was so marvelous to me. That is why I preach only the word.

Faith that believes the word as it is, not theology

There is something truly marvelous. There are pastors ministering in places where they could not learn theology, people ministering in difficult Muslim countries without proper theological training. When our coworkers go and preach the word, they believe it so well, receive it so well, and are so thankful. It is because they believe the word just as it is. Do you understand what this means?

Those who have not learned theology believe and receive this word so well that they receive salvation well and their faith grows well. But those who have learned theology always tilt their heads, fail to receive the word, and put their own thoughts first. The thoughts of man are always evil.

Where do your thoughts turn? You think not God's thoughts but your own interests. When do you and I go wrong? It is when we lead our life of faith adding our own thoughts. Then we follow our own desires and become adversaries of God. This is an unmistakable fact. It is so with ministers and with everyone. So you cannot imagine how important it is to follow the word.

There is a reason I am telling you this now. For the past 1,700

years people have believed in Jesus, but in Catholicism and Protestantism alike, not a single person was born again. That is why people dislike Christians. Why are they still sinners even though they believe in Jesus? Because they did not believe just as the word says. Jesus came to this earth and did the work of salvation, so if they had looked at the written word, confirmed it, held fast to it, believed it, and followed it, they could have received the remission of sins and become true disciples of Jesus. But that is not what happened.

The fruit given to the servant who follows the word

They just tell people to come to church, to give many offerings; they hand out high positions and demand more money. The problem starts with the ministers. Why has Christianity become so corrupt? The ministers are the bigger problem. The ministers of this world do not serve with their own hands as we do. They only keep up appearances. One of them rides a fine car with a chauffeur and enjoys golf, and he once told me that as a pastor I ought to enjoy at least that much. But the brothers who work with me get their hands dirty as they work. How could I play golf? When did Jesus ever teach that?

So when the brothers work, I work exactly the same. Only when I cannot do the literature work and other work at the same time am I bound to the literature work; when there is none, I work just like the brothers. I help with designs, buy them delicious food, and laugh together with them. There were also people who disliked that kind of life and left. But I am following the word even now.

Because we follow the word, God has made us bear fruit. Following the word that told us to preach the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit to the whole world, we are those who serve that work. Our workers translate the literature of the gospel into the languages of many countries, and you help that work alongside them. Translations have now been made into some thirty languages, and next year the gospel will be delivered in many more. In the past, even when we paid to have translations done, those who took the books grew fewer; but now those who take them have grown many. What does this tell us? That the content is good. This is the proof that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is true.

All this work is not done by me alone. Because you are with me, the work happens together. You cannot imagine how happy that makes me. The world is becoming harder and harder. But we do not lead our life of faith to display our own goodness.

The thoughts we harbor are all filthy. The talents we have are all talents God has given. Do not use these talents for yourselves. When God entrusts us with some work, carry out that work with the talents He has given, and receive the blessing of becoming good and faithful servants before God.

Until now we have lived using our talents for ourselves. From now on, when God entrusts us with work, use those talents for God's work. And when that work goes well, we must stop there, saying, I am Your servant; I am the Lord's lowly handmaid; I have only done as the Lord commanded.

We must never put ourselves forward, saying, I did this and I did that. If we do, the Lord is not pleased. When we become servants who, like the centurion, say, Only speak a word, and simply follow the word, the Lord praises us as truly faithful servants. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

We must know who Jesus fundamentally is

< Matthew 8:5-13 >

"Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.' And Jesus said to him, 'I will come and heal him.' The centurion answered and said, 'Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Then Jesus said to the centurion, 'Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.' And his servant was healed that same hour."

The centurion comes to Jesus and pleads with Him

Last time we saw the leper come to Jesus in faith and receive

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healing for his disease. The word we have read today is the same. When Jesus entered the town of Capernaum, a centurion came to Him. He pleaded like this: Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented. He earnestly wanted Him to heal his servant's paralysis. The Lord said, *"I will come and heal him."* Then the centurion answered, *"Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."* That is what the centurion said to Him.

This centurion was a Roman soldier. A man who commands a hundred men is called a centurion. When Jesus finished speaking on the mountain and came down, the first to come and be healed was the leper. Second, this centurion asked for help for his servant.

The centurion said, Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented. Though it was his own servant, this man seems to have had much compassion in his heart. Ordinarily a man of a centurion's rank might think little of whether a servant was sick or not. But since he said that his servant was dreadfully tormented, his heart must have ached. So he asked Jesus for help.

Jesus said that He would come and heal him. Then the centurion answered, Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof; only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. This man was a soldier. So he said, I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; I say to this one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it. He was a man who knew well the chain of command.

The centurion believed because he knew who Jesus was

It seems this man already knew Jesus before he came to Him. He believed that Jesus was not an ordinary man but the Son of God, the Savior. That is why he asked for help not for himself but for his servant. And he said, I also am a man under authority. I too, when my superior orders something, go when told to go and come when told to come. So I am not worthy to have the Lord come under my roof. As the centurion knew Him, Jesus was the Savior of mankind and the Son of God—God who had come into this world as the Savior.

He was saying that he was not worthy to have so exalted a One enter his lowly house. This man's heart is the heart of one who believes in Jesus. So Jesus praised this man's faith. And He spoke to the people of Israel who called themselves the descendants of Abraham: the natural sons of Israel will be cast out into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But many will come from east and west and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. The Gentiles will receive salvation and enter the kingdom of heaven to live with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while the natural people of Israel themselves are cast out. Then Jesus said to the centurion, *"Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you."* That same hour his servant was healed. This is what the passage says.

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If we know who Jesus is, receiving the remission of sins is not difficult

If we know and believe that the Lord is the Savior of mankind, we can also quickly believe that the Lord came to this earth and saved us with the water and the blood. To trust a person, we must know that person's character well. If we know his character well, we can believe everything he says, because we trust the person himself. If he is truly trustworthy, we can believe even the dreams he presents about the future. But if the person himself is not trustworthy, we cannot believe what he says either.

The leper who appeared earlier also came to Jesus, worshiped Him, and said, Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean. He knew who Jesus was. He knew that Jesus was the Son of God, the Savior of mankind, the very Messiah the people of Israel had been waiting for. So he believed. That is why he asked Him to heal his body, and when the Lord said, I am willing; be cleansed, his leprosy was cleansed.

This centurion was exactly the same. Jesus is trustworthy; He is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind; He is the One who has power. If I go to Him and ask for help, He will never turn me away. Because he believed so, he went and made his request. When Jesus said that He would come and heal him, the centurion said, I am not worthy to have You enter our house. How could the Savior, the Son of God, enter our shabby house? Only speak a word. So Jesus spoke, and the servant was healed.

It is the same in this age. It is not difficult for us to believe in Jesus and receive the remission of sins. Even looking at this passage, there is nothing difficult about it. We need only believe that Jesus is the Son of God the Father and also the Creator God who made the universe and all things. Believing in the salvation He came and accomplished for us is not such a difficult thing.

Jesus is the Creator God who made the universe

Why is that? Jesus is fundamentally God who made both the visible world and the invisible world. That very One is Jesus who came as our Savior. If we believe this, what reason is there not to believe that Jesus came to this earth for our sins, received baptism from John, and hung on the Cross and saved us? We come to believe it all. The reason people fail to receive the remission of sins is that they do not know who Jesus is. So they keep doubting whether what He did is true or false.

The leper and this centurion knew who Jesus fundamentally was. That is why they asked Him for help and believed. We too must know that Jesus is God and the Savior of you and me. The One who spoke when God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning is Jesus. The Word dwelt among us. At that time the Father was there, Jesus was there, and the Holy Spirit was there. These three decided to make the universe and all things and to make man. The One who spoke then is Jesus, the Son of God, the Creator, and the Savior who came to save you and me.

What could Jesus not do in coming to this earth and saving mankind? He is God. That is why the centurion came and said, My servant is lying on his bed, dreadfully tormented, and I cannot bear to watch. Please heal my servant. He asked in faith. When Jesus said that He would come and heal him, the centurion said, Only speak a word. You need not visit or enter my house. Just say one word right here, that my servant is healed, and he will be healed. So Jesus praised the centurion's faith and said, Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you. Because the centurion believed, his servant was healed.

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He has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Jesus came to this earth and became our Savior as well. Then how did He save us? Born on this earth, when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist and took the sins of the world upon Himself. And bearing the sins of the world, He was nailed to the Cross in our place, shed His blood, and suffered death. Jesus received in our place the judgment of death that you and I should have received. All this is recorded in the four Gospels of the Scriptures. Since we preach this gospel, what difficulty is there in receiving the remission of sins?

If we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind, we come to believe all the words of the salvation He accomplished. Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John for us, hung on the Cross and died, rose from death, and removed all our sins. There is no reason not to believe His word that it is finished. Believing in Jesus, receiving salvation, is not difficult.

The limit of the faith that believes only in the Cross

Yet among religious people there are those who preach the part about receiving the remission of sins in a lump. They only say that He saved us on the Cross. It is true that Jesus received on the Cross all the judgment for our sins. Then suppose someone believes only that. Suppose he does not know that Jesus received baptism from John and took on his sins, and believes only in Jesus who died on the Cross. And suppose we grant that he has been saved. Then how will he live after being saved?

With no Holy Spirit in his heart, he will live until he dies

repeating the same sins. There is always sin in his heart, because he has not passed his sins on to Jesus. He has not received the remission of sins in his heart and has no Holy Spirit, so how could he enter the kingdom of heaven? Jesus said that for a person to be born again, he must be born again of water and the Spirit. Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John and bore our sins, received the judgment for us on the Cross, rose from death, and saved us. We must believe that this Jesus is God by the Holy Spirit. He is God, the Savior who saved you and me through the baptism He received from John and His death on the Cross in our place. If one believes like this, there is no one who cannot be saved, and no one who cannot be born again.

Then why do people make their sermons so difficult? Some new theologians say that among the words Jesus spoke, this one is right and that one is wrong. Where among the words Jesus spoke is there anything wrong? It is only that our thinking does not reach them. Jesus simply spoke the word, *"As you have believed, so let it be done for you."* If one truly believed, it is done; if one did not believe, it is not. What is so difficult about that?

The Scriptures are believed by faith, not by understanding

There are sermons in which illustrations take up most of the time. That is why books of illustrations sell well. But I do not buy books of illustrations. If we just believe and preach the word of the Scriptures as it is, the hearer receives the remission of sins. When I make books and send them overseas, the person who reads them receives the remission of sins on the spot. What need is there for illustrations? Believing only when it is understood

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by the human head is not faith.

God created the heavens and the earth. Is this possible only by faith, or could it come by understanding? We do not know how vast the world of galaxies in this universe is. To say we believe it because we understand it makes no sense. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He created them by the word. If one believes because it is understood, that is not faith. The Scriptures say that faith leads to faith. What we cannot imagine becomes possible by faith. We can know by faith that Jesus is God. We can know because it is written in the word. Otherwise, how could we know it, and with what could we prove it?

That God is God we can know by looking at the universe and all things. God spoke then: Let the earth bring forth the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit. God commanded the earth so. Even now, if you dig up a mountain and take soil from deep underground and leave it, before long grass springs up there. It is because God spoke that it happens so. If God had not spoken, it would not be so. If on a mountain no one has ever entered there is an apple tree or a pear tree, it was not planted by man. Go to the mountains and there are pear trees, apple trees, cherry trees, and oak trees. Who made them? Because God said, Let the earth bring forth the herb that yields seed and the fruit tree that yields fruit, they have sprung up so ever since. We can only believe by faith.

The writer of Hebrews said that every house is built by someone. This house too has its builder. Because someone built the house, the house exists. Because God made the universe and all things, the universe and all things exist. If God had not made them, how could the universe and all things exist?

God has removed our sins and has written this word down. So we, like the centurion, need only say, Only speak a word.

Though Jesus is invisible to our eyes, we say, Only speak the word. Reading the word, we realize: Ah, Jesus bore our sins like this, He was judged like this, He rose from death and removed all our sins. Then all my sins have been removed. When we hold fast to the word and acknowledge it in the heart, sin disappears. It really happens so. The remission of sins is not received by speaking in tongues.

More than two thousand years have passed since Christianity began. More than two thousand years have passed since Jesus came. So we can only believe it as it is. But if you set the Scriptures aside and look at irrelevant commentaries, sermon collections, and the books of famous people, you lose your faith instead. How lamentable that is! There is no one who reads our books and fails to receive the remission of sins. The person who reads our books and still fails to receive the remission of sins is a person who does not know well who Jesus is.

Believing what Jesus did is also good faith. But knowing and believing who Jesus fundamentally is, is more fundamental and better faith. He is the One who made the universe. He is the One who, as promised, came clothed in human flesh and saved us. If we believe in Him Himself, what reason is there not to believe that He came to this earth, bore our sins, and received in our place the judgment for our sins?

The Scriptures say that by faith we understand that all things were framed. They say that by faith we receive salvation, and that we go from faith to faith. By faith we come to know that God made the universe. Is there anyone who can know it by analyzing all its components? No. It is possible by faith. A parent shows a child an apple, saying, This is an apple. The parent tells him that an apple is delicious, that eating it refreshes the mouth and helps digestion. The parent asks, I will give you an apple; do you believe this is an apple? The child says he believes. Then

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the mother gives him the apple. The child eats it and says it is truly delicious. Now that you know this is an apple, she says, next time you want an apple, ask for it, and I will give it to you. Our faith is like this.

Since people fail to understand, we end up explaining again and again. But we need only look at the word. In today's passage appears a soldier with a hundred men under him. Look at this man's faith. He said, *"But only speak a word."* When Jesus said, Let it be done for you as you have believed, his servant was healed that same hour. The Scriptures do not speak like someone solving a formula and announcing the answer. They are simply plain. The Lord came down from the mountain, and a soldier called a centurion came and asked Him to heal his servant. When the Lord said that He would come and heal him, the centurion said, I am not worthy to have You enter my house; only speak a word. Jesus spoke, and the servant was healed. The Scriptures are this simple.

If we believe just as this says, that is faith. Yet people keep trying to do something with human wisdom. I, too, when I try to explain how wrong doctrines have historically corrupted Christianity, find the sermon growing endlessly long. A sermon should be an hour at most, but written down, its volume swells several times over. Even I grew weary writing it. Why? Because unless it is explained historically and concretely, people do not understand. But believing in Jesus and receiving the remission of sins is not difficult. Is there anyone among you who has not yet received the remission of sins? The gospel of the water and the Spirit can be known well enough. It is only because people do not know who Jesus is that they fail to receive it.

Jesus is the Creator who made the universe and all things and made this world. He is the absolute God. To save you, that God was born, as He had promised, borrowing the body of a woman.

And at thirty He received baptism from John the Baptist. He received baptism from the representative of mankind and took over all the sins of you and me without even asking us. Jesus bore all the sins of you and me. And carrying our sins, He went to the Cross and received the judgment for the sins of you and me. He was nailed, He shed blood, He suffered, and He went to His death, receiving the judgment for sin in our place and saving us. Everything He did on this earth, He did to save you and me.

When we believe that fact in our hearts, we receive salvation. When we believe in the gracious Jesus, we receive salvation. It is not a difficult thing. Even people far overseas read our books and receive the remission of sins. Why then do the people in Korea fail to receive the remission of sins?

We must believe wholly with knowledge, emotion, and will

It is because Koreans are emotional; their feelings are too abundant. A person of character means a person who has all three in balance: knowledge, emotion, and will. The person who feels through what he knows, feels as much as he knows, and puts into action as much as he feels is a person of character. But there are people who weep and wail without even knowing. Without knowing that Jesus bore their sins, they weep thinking how much it must have hurt Jesus to hang on the Cross. They say they believe that He was nailed and died for them. But they do not know that Jesus bore their sins with the baptism He received from John.

Without knowing, they have only emotion and will, leaving knowledge out. Then only their feelings remain. Because they believe their feelings, when the feelings disappear, their faith

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disappears too. They suppose that abundant emotion means believing in Jesus well. But it is not so. The person who believes with knowledge, emotion, and will is different. He believes that Jesus is the Son of God and God who created the universe. He believes that to save mankind He was born borrowing the body of Mary. He believes that at thirty He received baptism from the representative of mankind and took over my sins and the sins of all mankind without leaving out a single one. He believes that carrying these sins He went to the Cross, received the judgment for sin in our place, died, rose from death, and became our Savior. He knows this and believes it.

We believe as much as we know. And then we feel: He has removed all my sins; what a gracious One; what a good God; How thankful I am to God—and so we believe. After that we go on to the will. Now that I have received salvation, should I live as I did before? Life is hard, and I worry how I will solve food, clothing, and shelter if I live for the Lord. But the Lord said He would take care of it. It is written in the Scriptures that if I live for the Lord, the Lord takes responsibility for my life. Then I resolve: I will do so. Having faith of knowledge, emotion, and will, we are not swept away by feelings. We know, we feel, and we believe with the will. Having become one whole person as a saved man, in everything we first know, feel as much as we know, and act with the will as much as we feel. This is a truly whole person.

Yet there is a saying that religion is opium. If they do not weep and wail and shed tears, they think by themselves that they have not received grace, that they have not received God's love. So they think of their departed parents, think of Jesus nailed to the Cross, and weep at church. They weep over the sins they have committed. They weep asking for their sins to be remitted. Then their minds feel purified; by shedding tears their emotions

are rinsed. But it lasts only that hour and is useless. Religious people are people who always live by emotion. We are not people who live that way. With knowledge, emotion, and will—knowing with the head, feeling with the heart, moving into action with the hands and feet. Such a person is a truly whole person. We must know accurately with the head, feel with the heart, act with the will, and so believe and live.

As you hear the word, know who the Lord is, know that He is God, and believe. If you believe what He has done, no one can fail to be saved. The Scriptures teach us this. Such faith is great faith. We need only believe like this.

People say they believe in the Cross and have been saved. But on the Cross He received the judgment for your sins. Has Jesus ever taken your sins away from you? For Jesus to become your Savior, He must first receive baptism and move your sins onto His own body. Then He must receive the judgment for those sins on the Cross. Only then is the judgment Jesus received effective for us. If you only say, He was judged for me, I believe—then what will your conscience do with the sin that is in your heart right now? And what about the sins you will commit from now on? Trying to solve them with prayers of repentance and calling it sanctification is all religion made by man.

The person born again of water and the Spirit is different. He believes that Jesus is God and our Savior. He believes that Jesus, who received baptism from John and bore our sins, went to the Cross and received the judgment for our sins and saved us, is God Himself and our Savior. It is a fact that our sins passed onto Jesus when He was baptized by John the Baptist. Because we believe the word, our sins passed on. Jesus was judged in our place, died, and rose again. This was the work of salvation for you and me. Because He is God and the Savior, He saved us

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abundantly. By believing in God the Savior, by believing in what He did, we are born twice.

A sermon, too, must be preached so that it is properly understood. If you listen to a sermon for a whole hour and the moment you step out of the chapel you do not know what it was about, you have not heard a sermon. There is a saying: though a man claims to know something, if he cannot explain it so that even the dullest listener understands, he does not know it himself.

No one can explain a Jesus he has not truly met. He cannot explain Him in detail. But after explaining in detail, one can also solve in detail how to receive the remission of sins and whatever problems there are. He can know why it all is so. Why? Because he has met the Lord and the Holy Spirit is in his heart. The Holy Spirit searches even the deep things of God. What the Father did, with what heart He planned, and how He accomplished it—if the Holy Spirit is within, one knows it all.

That is why the person without the Holy Spirit does not understand the Scriptures even when he reads them. To him the white is just paper and the black is just letters. That is why He said again and again that one must be born again. Do churchgoers know about being born again of water and the Spirit? They do not. I search whether the renowned pastors of our country preach on being born again of water and the Spirit. These days there are videos, so one can listen to them all. They go along explaining—about two-thirds of the way they do fairly well—and then at the rest they leap right over it. They just say that Jesus saved us by hanging on the Cross. They say that is being born again.

To be born again is to be born twice. One must state accurately how one is born to be born again. Our books are delivered to our overseas coworkers with a clear beginning, development, turn, and conclusion. Because the faith in my heart

has been delivered to those people just the same, they too are now preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit overseas like that. If a minister or missionary who has not been born again goes to our brothers and sisters and talks, it does not get through. They discern: you have sin in your heart, so what born-again talk is this? This person is not true. No one can touch our brothers and sisters carelessly. Even the evangelicals cannot touch them. The truth is clear. Look at it this way and it is clear; look at it that way and it is clear. We must be saved by faith.

Faith grows through difficulties

Now the world is growing darker and darker. These days, they say, to buy a large house one borrows about half from the bank. Some, they say, buy a house borrowing most of the price. But how many people can bear the interest? Having to pay a large sum in interest every month, an ordinary person can hardly endure. Even a former leader of a country would not find it easy to bear such heavy interest. It means the world is growing that dark.

But we are certain. There will be no such thing as this country becoming a sea of fire through war while we have not yet finished preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If it ever seems likely, we need only pray: Father, protect this country; let us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we pray, God prevents it one way or another. There is nothing to worry about. Then where did such faith come from? The person who believes in Jesus, the born-again person, has received the authority to become a child of God. Are we not God's children? Did He not say that when a child prays to God the Father, He answers? Are we not living even now receiving

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answers? It is because God helps us that we live like this. It is not because we do anything so well. Therefore we must live by faith, preach the gospel by faith, and be saved by faith.

When you are within our community and receive salvation, you come to use faith. When do we use faith? If I have strength, ability, and much money, I do not pray to God for money. It is not only I; you are the same. It is because something is lacking that we pray. When we pray for help, we receive answers again. Because God helps, we do this and that, and it works.

But there are people in the church who say they live by faith and yet do not live by faith. Do you know why they cannot? In the end it is because they do not believe in their hearts that Jesus is their Savior, and so the Holy Spirit is not within them. Such a person, when hardship comes, struggles to escape by human ways and means. Then, when all his abilities are exhausted, he just sits in a daze, blaming God.

The believer's faith keeps growing. It grows through difficulties. But the person in the church who has not been born again, who only knows about this gospel, who only knows who Jesus is, uses human ways and means. What is so great about human ways and means? They are nothing. Use the few talents you have and the bottom shows. Use your few strong points, your few clever points, and the bottom shows; in the end there is nothing left to use. What is needed is faith.

Through rebuke we enjoy the grace of the remission of sins

There are people in the church who do not use faith, praying and believing to solve problems. They lead the brothers and sisters merely humanly. If we just say, There, there, and slur

things over, the brothers and sisters die. What must be said firmly must be said. You are doing this—will you receive God's blessing if you go on this way? Are you not living only for yourself right now? Is this not something you are doing not for the Lord? What must be said firmly must be said. And when that time has passed, we comfort them. You too must grow in faith through this; you too must know your fault; hold fast to the word of the Lord—so we encourage them.

It is enough if one knows one's own fault. How is it when we are rebuked for doing wrong? The person who has not received the remission of sins dies when rebuked. But the person who has received the remission of sins, when rebuked, realizes: I was rebuked because I did wrong. Then he comes to know that when the Lord received baptism from John, He took this sin too, and his heart is refreshed. His heart brightens. For he will not be beaten later for what he did wrong; it is already finished. So his heart brightens and he can always follow the Lord in faith.

The life of faith before receiving the remission of sins and after receiving it are completely different. After receiving the remission of sins, it is faith first, faith second, and faith third. It continues on in faith. But the person who believes only with his head and does not believe with his heart does not know how to use faith. With human ways and means he keeps going to people: why is that person like that; why does he hate me? But that is not it. When he realizes, He is rebuking me to bring me out of my wrong, he comes to know true love.

Faith, then, is what pleases God. The one who does not believe dishonors God. He resents God and brings dishonor on God.

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"The just shall live by faith"

"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17). Believe. We must believe that God is such a One, and believe the work God did when He came to this earth and saved us. Then we receive salvation. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the saved. We must hold fast to the word, saying, Let it be done according to the word. In the beginning God made the universe and all things. The words Jesus spoke are written here in the Scriptures. How He saved us and how we ought to live are all written here. When we believe this word, this word enters us and works.

If we have no faith, He makes faith spring up. If we have no strength, He makes strength spring up. So He makes us take on the challenge and accomplish it. Therefore we must know that to the person who does not use faith, God gives difficulties so that he will use faith. We must know how to use faith. It is not enough merely to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, merely to preach it. That the Holy Spirit is in the heart means that God has acknowledged my faith. The Holy Spirit is truly precise.

By all means, anyone can be saved by faith. We can live by faith. By faith we can be delivered from the last calamity. We can avoid hell and enter the kingdom of heaven. By faith we will live happily in the Lord and then meet the Lord. In the Lord's Kingdom we will enjoy bliss with Him forever. We will live enjoying blessing and joy. Believe in God who has given us such blessings. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

We must believe in Jesus and receive guidance

< Matthew 8:14-22 >

"Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them. When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.' And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then another of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.'"

Jesus who entered Peter's house

In today's passage the Lord entered Peter's house. When He entered Peter's house, Peter's mother-in-law lay sick, and the Lord healed her sickness. Catholicism, while exalting Peter as the foremost Apostle, supposes that the Apostles never married.

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But when Jesus entered Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever and healed her. This passage embarrasses them, for they take pride in serving the Lord unmarried. But marriage is the normal thing. Unless there is a special reason, it is normal to marry.

Here Jesus healed the fever of Peter's mother-in-law. What is a fever? Just as the word says, a fever is the body running hot. The head is hot and the whole body burns. But the fever this passage speaks of is different from such a fever of the body.

Jesus saw the mother-in-law lying sick with a fever and healed her. We would ordinarily expect Him to heal the sickness by laying hands on her or by putting His hand on her head and praying. But the passage says, *"He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them" (Matthew 8:15)*. The Lord only touched her hand.

Christians suffer from many fevers. Among people within religion this fever is common. When you concentrate on one thought and brood over it, you catch a fever. In particular, if you believe in Jesus and yet have sin in your heart, you catch a fever. It was good when you first believed in Jesus, but when you sin and that sin does not leave your heart, you catch the fever.

Christians who have caught the fever because they cannot solve the problem of sin by themselves

The person whose sin has not left his heart tries to find the answer within his thoughts. Like Won-Buddhism at its beginning—thinking on and on and, when no answer comes, returning to the starting point—that thinking never ends.

Such a person thinks like this: Jesus is the Son of God, my Savior; He came to this earth, was nailed to the Cross, removed

my sins, and saved me. And when I do wrong while leading my life of faith after being saved, I need only pray in repentance. The original sin has been remitted, and the sins I commit as I live on can be remitted through prayers of repentance. So it is not that I have no sin at all until I die. This is how he thinks.

Then, recalling the word *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10),* he draws his conclusion about the life of faith. He falls into the doctrine of sanctification and ends there. Since man sins until he dies, he supposes, God the Father overlooks it because he believes in Jesus, and he will be made whole when he dies. Since there is no further answer, he concludes so. But this is not the right answer. This is exactly a fever.

When thought is concentrated on one point and that thinking does not end, we call it a fever. We also catch fevers in social life when we fix on some pursuit. For example, if you fall into the thought of succeeding in business and living well, you catch a fever there. You sink into that business and rack your brains over it day after day, but what man does never comes to an end. What man does is not exact either. So you catch a fever.

Someone says he will excel at sports and spread his dream. The cyclist rides alone day and night in training; the boxer swings his fists all his life to succeed in that field. But no one achieves it all perfectly. No one succeeds just because he sets his mind on it. Christians in particular, however much they ponder doctrine to solve their own problem of sin, never reach the end.

It was good at first when they believed in Jesus, but after a while there is sin in the heart again. If there is sin, they must pray in repentance, and after that they must attain sanctification—so it keeps going around. Since it never ends, within ten years or so of believing in Jesus they suffer the fever three or four times. When that fails, they try fasting prayer, wondering if God will

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then overlook them, but that does not work well either. Like a squirrel on a wheel, however hard they try, they cannot solve their own problem of sin.

The fever leaves only when we receive guidance

The greatest task of human life is the problem of sin. Yet this problem goes unsolved. But when Jesus saw Peter's mother-in-law lying sick with a fever and touched her hand, the fever left her, and the woman arose and served Jesus.

Ordinarily one lays hands on the sick, but Jesus did not lay hands on her; He simply touched her hand. Yet the fever left, and the woman served the Lord. We must believe in Jesus and receive guidance well. Suffering the fever alone, however hard you try, nothing is solved. Is there anyone who solves his own problem by himself? It is not solved. Then what must we do? We must receive guidance. There must be someone who guides us, and we must receive guidance.

When you receive guidance, the fever leaves. If you do not receive guidance and do not even know whether you have been born again or not, however long you think alone, will that thinking ever end? When you receive guidance, have fellowship, and receive counsel, an answer comes out of even the most vexing problem. And that problem is solved.

Even the born-again can catch a fever. Alone in his thoughts there is no end; he thinks again what he thought before, searches and searches again for a way, and it is not solved. Therefore we must receive guidance. When we receive guidance, it is solved. We must see that the Lord is speaking of this here.

Jesus who cast out the demons with His word

Verses 16 and 17 record this: *"When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 'He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.'"*

People brought many who were demon-possessed to Jesus. Jesus cast the demons out of them with a word. And He healed the sick as well. Here the Lord healed the demon-possessed with the word.

But if you cast a demon out of a demon-possessed person, will the demon not come in again? The Scriptures say that later a greater demon comes in. Cast out a demon, and it goes out and returns with its friends as a horde of demons. The Scriptures say that a legion of demons enters a person's heart and torments him. If you cast out someone's demon, he will be grateful, but what good is casting it out? Before long he will be seized by demons again. Jesus cast out the demons with the word: Away with you, Satan—He cast them out with the words He spoke.

Even a demon-possessed person is not gripped by the demon every day. Ordinarily he goes about life in society like everyone else. It is not that the demon-possessed cannot function in society.

I once stayed at a prayer house, and there I saw the demon-possessed. Such a person functions well in society, handles money well, and gets along with people. Yet he was possessed. The one possessed by a big demon seizes and crushes the one possessed by a small demon. A demon-possessed man makes the sound of a real pig grunting. When the man with the big demon says, You have a pig demon in you, the other says, Yes, I have

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a pig demon; what are you going to do about it? So the man with the big demon handles the man with the small demon at will.

So even the demon-possessed function well in society. Ordinarily the demon does not show itself. But there are many who scream alone, say their head hurts, say their body aches. There are those who cannot pray to God personally, who utter unintelligible sounds while claiming to speak in tongues, whose bodies shake. Such a person is demon-possessed. Trying to converse with the demon, he makes sounds he himself cannot understand and does things he does not know. While communing with the demon like that, he does not even know what he is doing.

The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit saves the demon-possessed

Then how can we save the demon-possessed? We can save them with the word. When such a person has returned to a sound mind, we open the word and study the Scriptures with him. Even the demon-possessed listen to the word at ordinary times. They understand and hold conversations.

But there is a moment when the problem breaks out. When we try to deliver the word about the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, he closes his eyes and refuses to listen, or falls asleep and snores. Exactly at that point he resists. He listens well to the word about sin. But when it reaches the part about the baptism, the man loses his senses and his eyes roll back. The evil spirit is obstructing him.

Even so, we deliver it once, then deliver it again from the beginning, and again. Preaching the gospel to such a person, we end up repeating what we have said. Why? Because he is

resisting at that point. So we keep telling him. Then, later, when this part is loosed, we can see him released from the demon. His mind becomes clear. We cast out the demon with the word. Just as the Lord cast out demons with His own word, if we merely shout, Satan, be gone in the name of Jesus Christ, it is useless. Before long the demon comes in again.

When we receive the remission of sins, demons cannot rule over us

But when we deliver the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the person comes to know that the sins in his heart have been removed, things change. When he knows that Jesus removed all the sins of the demon-possessed, receives the remission of sins, and believes that he has no sin, the demon can no longer rule over him. We must know this.

The person with the fever must receive guidance, and the demon-possessed must hear the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. When one receives the remission of sins, the fever leaves and the demon leaves too. So one meets the Lord and becomes whole.

Before I believed in Jesus and was born again, I saw many demon-possessed people. Before I believed in Jesus I had a decent friend, and that friend became demon-possessed. One day I went to his house, and he was bound to a pillar with iron chains. When I asked why they had bound him like this, they said he bares his teeth and lunges at people like a mad dog. I stepped back, and though he was shackled, he was strong enough to snap the chains. He was possessed by a legion of demons. People said nothing could be done for him because he was demon-possessed, and three days later he died. The demon-possessed go into

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convulsions.

Some demons do not cause convulsions but live together inside the person. The eyes of the demon-possessed are not clear. They are murky, as if something covered them. When something covers the heart, it actually becomes so. By all means we must know clearly that our Lord healed the sick and the demon-possessed with the word and cast out the demons, fulfilling the word of Old Testament prophecy.

Those who follow in pursuit of wealth and glory

Looking at Matthew chapter 8, verses 18 through 20, when Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons, many people gathered and many followed Him. Why? Because when they came to Jesus, He gave them food and healed their diseases; they received much help for the flesh.

Among the many who followed Jesus there was a certain scribe, a man of learning, something like a government official. He came to Jesus and said, *"Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go" (Matthew 8:19)*. But Jesus said, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

Jesus had nowhere in this world to lay His head, for all men were sinners and He had to remove their sins. This scribe said he would follow, thinking that if he followed Jesus he would enjoy wealth and glory. But Jesus shattered that man's vain dream from the start. I have no house, not even a foot of ground to stick a toothpick in. Follow Me and you will only become like Me. Will you still follow? Then the man turned away.

In fact, among those who want to believe in and follow Jesus on this earth, there are many like this. Many follow wondering

whether, if they follow Jesus, they will become rich in the flesh. But it is not so. The one who follows that way later becomes a religious con man trading on the name of Jesus. One must not follow that way. If a person acts as a pastor, an evangelist, a clergyman without receiving the remission of sins, he ends up a con man.

Let the dead bury their own dead

In verses 21 and 22 there is this word. Another of Jesus' disciples said, *"Lord, let me first go and bury my father,"* and Jesus said, *"Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."*

Even though we have received the remission of sins, we cannot follow the Lord while attending to every great family affair and solving every problem. Here, to the disciple who said he would go bury his dead parent, Jesus said to leave the dead to the dead, and, You, follow Me.

In truth, we cannot follow the Lord while doing everything of the world. That way we cannot serve the Lord. Let that person faithfully do the work given to him, and you and I must follow the Lord while faithfully doing the work each of us has been given. That is what is right. If we get involved in every family occasion—attending weddings, burying whoever dies, going to first-birthday parties, attending every social gathering—when could we follow the Lord? That way we cannot follow the Lord.

A life that has laid down the things of the world for the gospel

As I have mentioned before, I have a young nephew, and I

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had a heart to do this and that for him. But if I am tied to that, I cannot preach the Lord's gospel. If I fail to preach the Lord's gospel, however much I help my nephew in the flesh, would that be the right thing? So, having no other way, I entrusted him to God. Lord, I cannot take charge of my nephew, so take charge of him; bless his future and let him live well, and save him too—so I asked the Lord.

From then on I kept in my heart the word, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*. How can I, a man who has died, live for my nephew? How can I, a man who has died, go around attending family occasions? So I gave it all up. And in doing so I was cursed at plenty. Would I not be? I was cursed at plenty.

My relatives called me a heretic. So I said to my nephews, Does your uncle seem to be a heretic? Then will you listen to what I have to say? They answered, Why should we listen to you? When I said, Still, should you not at least hear me out? they said, No—listen to you, and almost anyone falls right in. So I said, Then should we not talk over what is unscriptural about it? But without ever listening they kept calling me a heretic and avoiding me, so I said, Even as your uncle, how could I ever guide you? They did not want to receive guidance.

So I told them: from now on, whether you marry or whatever happens, do not contact me. I have no time to come to you. Even if you marry, take care of it yourselves and do not call me. Having done so, my heart is rather at ease. To me, our brothers and sisters are my family. If our brothers and sisters are sick or something happens to them, is it not there that my heart should be spent? If one is a true Christian, this is the right way.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit and the Church of God

If we open the words of Jesus, hear them, and yet ignore them, we are people who have nothing to do with the Lord. We believe in Jesus through His word. This passage tells us four things. Jesus must guide the person with the fever; He casts the demon out of the demon-possessed with the word and heals the sick as well. And when we follow the Lord, we must not chase wealth and glory, but know what the Lord's will is and serve that will first. And we are the Lord's people, not people of the world.

As we serve the Lord's will first, the Lord fills what we need and makes us bear more fruit. Therefore we must receive this word as it is, believe it as it is, and live it as it is. This is the life of faith. This is the right life of faith. If, being in the world, we get involved in and attend every family occasion of everyone connected to you and me, how could we follow the Lord? He said, Let the dead bury their own dead, and, You, follow Me. If we are true disciples of Christ, we ought to do so—this is what this word tells us.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel by which the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist, bore our sins, and removed our sins. This salvation is not needed only when we receive salvation. It is needed when we guide souls; it is needed when we cast demons out of the demon-possessed; and the word of this gospel is needed when we guide the person with the fever who wanders in his own thoughts without knowing where to go.

When a person receives the remission of sins, God then grants him the Church. When He grants the Church, that person comes into the Church and lives there, and the Lord opens up his future. If he does not meet the Church and does not lead his life

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of faith within the Church, he loses his way even after receiving the remission of sins. Then he is slain. Many have died not knowing this.

The Church of God is absolutely necessary. We must know it so and live so. Do you see? Let us all hold fast to the gospel of the water and the Spirit and live receiving the Lord's guidance within His Church.

We are preparing to do many kinds of work. I will pray that the Lord helps this work, and that the preaching of the gospel is carried out with power. Though the world is hard, I will pray that the gospel is preached with power through the Internet as well, and that our coworkers overseas and at home are strengthened. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Entrust the difficulties you meet in life to the omniscient and omnipotent Lord

< Matthew 8:23-27 >

"Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!' But He said to them, 'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?' Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. So the men marveled, saying, 'Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?'"

Right now our country and the whole world are unstable. Wars, famines, and disasters do not cease. Our country in particular is unstable in its economy and unstable in its security. The economy should improve but does not, and security remains precarious. Some powers even incite war, holding their own people hostage to preserve their regime. At such a time, what must we do first? It is prayer. We must kneel before the Lord and pray.

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The disciples on the sea where a great tempest arose

When Jesus got into the boat, His disciples followed—that is, the Lord and the disciples boarded the same boat. But as the boat went on, a great swell arose. The Scriptures record, *"A great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!'" (Matthew 8:24–25)* When it comes to this, a person can only call on the Lord. In truth, they should have had faith in the Lord even before reaching such a point, but the disciples did not yet have such faith. So the Lord had determined to show His disciples that day who He is—the omniscient and omnipotent One.

Anyone who has been on a boat knows the terror. Out on the open sea, the water moves like a carpet. When it surges to one side, that side rises and the other side falls. Then it flips over and the waves crash down on the boat. In shallow water the sea merely laps, but out on the open sea the whole sea heaves as if dancing. The boat Jesus and His disciples had boarded was a small boat holding about twenty people. Such a boat had met a great swell, so the disciples, scared out of their wits, woke the sleeping Jesus and cried out to Him to save them.

The Lord who rebuked the winds and the sea

When the disciples cried out, Jesus spoke: *"Why are you fearful, O you of little faith? Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm" (Matthew 8:26).* The Lord first rebuked the disciples' lack of faith, and then arose and rebuked the winds and the sea. Another Gospel records that

the Lord said, Peace, be still. Wind, waves, why are you so noisy? Be still—so He spoke.

Just one second earlier the boat had been about to capsize in the uproar and the wind was raging. But when Jesus arose and rebuked the wind and the waves, telling them to be still, the sea instantly grew quiet. Then the disciples marveled and said, *"Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matthew 8:27)* All the things of nature hear this One's word and move.

Jesus is the Creator who made all things in the universe

Jesus is the One who made the universe and all things—the galaxies, the earth, the moon, the sun, and all the world of the heavens. Just as when God said, Let there be light, and there was light, when He said, Let them be, all things came to be. The Jesus we believe in is that very One. Through this event the disciples learned a tremendous fact: Ah, this One is not merely the Son of God; He is the Creator who created the universe and all things. Though He wears flesh like ours and is with us, He is truly God—this is what they realized.

Jesus is God and became man. He became man and came as the Savior to save the sick, the dead, and the sinful. He is the main figure of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who received baptism from John and personally bore the sins of the world, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, shedding His blood and dying, and rose again in three days, accomplishing our salvation completely. The disciples came to believe that Jesus is that very Savior. Jesus gave His disciples living, vivid education.

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Entrust the difficulties you meet in life to the omniscient and omnipotent Lord

It is the same with us. We too believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet in our lives we go through hardships and meet things we cannot solve by our own strength. At such times, if we bring the problem to the Lord and pray, the Lord solves it. The Lord is such a One. He is our Savior, and He is also Almighty God. To teach us this fact, the Lord sometimes even allows us to fall into difficult situations.

Knowing this, whenever the heart is anxious and help is needed, if we pray for help, God, who is mighty, solves our problems as the Mighty One.

The world is in hardship and our country too. They say the economy will be worse next year than this year. If this country's economy collapses completely, we too will suffer. If neighboring countries threaten us with weapons, we cannot serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit in peace. But such things, too, God has allowed.

To preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit we build websites, translate into many languages, publish books, and upload writings and audio to many media—there is truly much to do. If the world grows harder, preaching this gospel becomes that much harder. Therefore we must stay awake and pray. Jesus will protect us, but we must not sit back saying, He will protect us anyway; we must pray for help. Why? Because that is the right posture.

God knows everything we need. Yet He said, Ask, seek, knock, because He will give when we ask. Of course, one might think, how could a boat with Jesus aboard run into trouble? But because the Church of God also lives in this world, it often falls into difficulties.

The Church of God also goes through difficulties

Difficulties come to the Church of God at every moment. You may not know it well because you live enjoying what has already been accomplished, but you cannot imagine how complicated and wearying it is administratively to carry that work. God allows such difficulties even to the Church of God. When we pray over such problems in faith, God solves them. Even God's workers must pray without fail. This is what our Lord is teaching us.

Difficulties teach us to fear God

We must seek the mighty God not only in times of crisis but in our daily lives. The truth that God is our Father, our Shepherd, our Savior, and our Friend must be stacked up in our hearts, layer upon layer, by faith.

To give us such faith, God sometimes gives us difficulties. Through such things we learn the faith that knows how to fear God. To fear God is to respect and love Him, to stand in awe of Him and yet trust and rely on Him. To teach us that fear, God allows difficulties in our lives. Therefore we must know His intent, solve the problems of sin in our hearts by faith, and pray before the Lord when the flesh is weary and help is needed. We must clearly know what kind of relationship the Lord and we have, and become those who live by that faith.

Do you not need the Lord's help in your life? Can you get through every difficulty that befalls you and me by human means? People say a man is able, a man is smart, but in truth it is nothing. Spend the few things I have, and nothing more comes out. It is the same with you.

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As we live on, we accumulate experience little by little and learn by seeing many things with the wisdom God gives. With the wisdom of this world there are only a few things we can use. Even the talents we brought at birth run dry once we spend the few of them. Is it not so? Try writing down on paper what you know. How many items would there be? In fact there are only a few.

Faith that grows in our lives

Long ago, finding it so hard to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I once tried writing in order to preach it. I had no such ability, but the Lord had saved me, and I thought this would be needed to accomplish the Lord's purpose, so I tried. Starting with what was easy, I opened one chapter of the Scriptures and wrote its meaning straight through. I could write in the style of biblical exposition, but when I closed the Scriptures and wrote what I believed, one page was enough. Then I realized: if I preach, add commentary, and unfold it carrying faith, it will become literature ministry.

To preach and make books means that the Holy Spirit within me gives me realization and has me speak it to the hearers. So it is the word in the Scriptures, but at the same time it becomes the word God speaks to us living now. It becomes not my word but God's word. I thought, if I add my knowledge and commentary to this, literature ministry will be achieved. This way I could write on the word of the Scriptures until I die—no, even for thousands or hundreds of millions of years. Why? Because the Lord does not tell us everything all at once.

After we receive salvation, we begin with the training of simply hearing and believing the word of God. We hear the word

much and apply what we have heard in our lives, making the word into faith as the Word became flesh. Thus we grow our faith in life, and He makes us grow more and more into masters of faith. Receiving the remission of sins does not make faith puff up all at once like popped rice; it grows as we learn in our lives.

For example, suppose I am serving only the Lord and have no money to buy toothpaste and nothing to eat. Then, when I pray and believe, saying, Lord, I have no money for toothpaste, I have nothing to eat, give us this day our daily bread, fill what my life needs—I experience the Lord filling it. Experiencing this, I come to enjoy intimate fellowship with Jesus.

Jesus is my Friend, my Savior, my God, my Shepherd, and the omniscient and omnipotent God. Seen in the dimension of the Trinity, He is also my Father. Why? Because He made me. So our faith piles up more and more. Faith is not something that flashes by once and hardens; it takes concrete shape and grows as we fellowship with the Lord in our lives. The more it does, the more intimate our fellowship with Jesus becomes.

The living word of God

Therefore, when we look at this word, its meaning is understood. We come to know why the Holy Spirit gave us this word and why He had it written. Even now, listening to sermons on this word, we can experience the problems of our hearts being solved. For this word is the living word of God. Just as this word had effect for the disciples of old, it has the same effect now for you and me.

Wind, waves, be still—why are you so noisy?—He commanded, and the sea grew still. Among those who go through many hard things in this world, the person who lives not

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by his own strength but by faith experiences such things through believing in Jesus. Even if you have an incurable disease, you come to experience the Lord who heals it directly or opens the way to treatment and solves that problem.

Our life with the Lord is the life of faith. We look up to God in daily life, receive help in daily life, and walk with the Lord in daily life. This is God's blessing—God meeting His people and having fellowship with them. While we live on this earth we fellowship with the Lord, and when the Lord takes us, we live in fellowship with Him in His Kingdom. Because the Lord lives forever, He gives us everlasting life as well. He makes us live forever, fellowship forever, and enjoy forever all that He has given.

Therefore the churches across the country must pray at every mealtime and every worship service. Even if those outside the country rattle threats of war, God will of course protect us. Even so, we must pray for help. When we pray for help and the problem is solved by God's helping, we come to know the Lord's power, experience His help, and give thanks.

That is thanksgiving offered in faith. Otherwise we end up doctrinal believers, religious believers. Merely saying, I believe, is not true faith. Are we walking with the Lord daily like Enoch—that is what matters.

Walk with the Lord and pray for His kingdom

We must walk with the Lord. The born-again, the people of faith, walk with the Lord at all times—today, tomorrow, every day. We watch for what the Lord wants, what He says, where He is telling us to go with Him, and walk together with Him. Therefore we must pray for the expansion of the Lord's kingdom

and pray that this country stays at peace so that we can serve the Lord.

The whole world is losing freedom little by little. When society becomes a system that suppresses individual freedom, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, and freedom of assembly disappear. If society says, We do not want you; we do not permit what you say, you must shut your mouth; if it says you must be sacrificed for the calm of society, you must be sacrificed. They say everyone is given equal opportunity and treated equally, but no such thing exists in this world.

He bestows grace on those who rely on the Lord

To the person who thinks of the Lord, truly believes and gives thanks for the Lord's work and word, relies on the Lord, and walks with Him, the Lord bestows His grace all the more. To the person who claims to be saved yet neither relies on the Lord nor follows His will, what would the Lord supply? Such a person cannot receive the Lord's grace and blessing.

The Scriptures say, *"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12)*. This is the great teaching God gives us. I do not believe it when someone says, I serve and follow the Lord, while in fact sitting still, lording it over others and stirring things up at will, and yet claims the Lord blesses him. Go that way and you are ruined instead.

The Lord becomes a Friend to and helps the one who honors Him, the one who, though lacking, unites his heart with the Lord and fellowships with Him. Such a one He blesses. Otherwise one becomes like the man who received one talent—a man who trusts his own strength and his own wisdom as he lives.

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In the old days there were people like this. When material things came in abundantly, they would not offer it all for the Lord but offered only a little, storing up the rest and then releasing it as offerings when work dried up. Such a person does not pray to the Lord; he lives by human ways and means. Then faith fails to grow and he finally comes to ruin.

To divide and use the material things God has given, with good management and in due measure, is the life of a right steward. But when it comes to living by faith, just as the word says, "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17), we should spend for the Lord as much as the Lord has given, and ask the Lord's help for what we need. When we do this daily, our faith piles up. If instead we live by human ways and means, faith runs dry, and living by our own strength we fall into our own craftiness and die.

All the disciples could do was pray

The disciples in the same boat with Jesus were one step from the boat sinking. What could the disciples do? Nothing but come to Jesus and cry out, Lord, the boat is sinking; help us; save us. Could they have bailed the water out and stopped it? If water were coming in through a hole in the boat, they could bail and plug it, but this was the waves crashing down from above. When waves crash onto a small boat holding about twenty, it fills up in an instant. So it was not something human strength could solve.

It is like when war breaks out and a great disaster strikes. Hiding in a basement will not solve it. If everything above ground is destroyed and even the food is ruined, coming out of the basement, by what means could one live? Therefore we must pray with the worst in mind. Lord, prevent war; hold and govern

those who threaten our country and the world; make them unable even to think of war—so we must pray. Almighty God is mighty, so He may fulfill it just as we pray, or He may remove such threats another way.

Therefore we must pray. All the disciples could do was pray. Look at the Scriptures: people meet many problems and events. And what could the disciples and those around them do? Nothing but pray. Then could they pray any old way? One can pray only as much as one ordinarily knows who the Lord is. If you do not know the Lord, how will you pray?

The religions of the world say that if you only believe in Jesus on the Cross, if you only receive Jesus, you are saved. And there they stop dead. From then on they live entirely by human ways and means. They pray for a little help, but there is no true faith. Even if they believed, they believed alone by themselves; it is not faith the Lord helps.

But we are different. When we meet a problem, we prepare in advance before it worsens, pray, God, help us, and also strive hard. Praying alone is not enough; effort must go with it. God is the One who gives us wisdom, so we must seek that wisdom and do our best in what we can do. I do not count past failures as mere failures, for through them all God gives wisdom.

The nearer the end, the more intimately walk with the Lord

Therefore, the nearer the end comes, the more intimately we must commune with the Lord. And we must seek the Lord's help. Praying, seeking, knocking, asking—we must live a life that continues without ceasing. We must also live fitly to the Lord's will and live walking with the Lord.

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The Lord becomes our Helper. So we can live, live by faith, and glorify the Lord by faith. Today's passage teaches us exactly this. We must know it so, believe it so, pray, and give thanks. Our Lord becomes our Father, our Shepherd, our Friend—everything we need. That He is with us is truly a great blessing.

Therefore we must ask Him for help. Just as the disciples cried out, Lord, save us, let us also pray for help. Let us pray that He prevents war and gives peace, protects our security and revives the economy. If the country's economy is hard, we too suffer. Let us also pray that He keeps us from influenza and various viruses, that He keeps us in all these things as we do our part to keep ourselves. Let us pray that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached to all the earth, and that God blesses every step of preparation for preaching that gospel. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The Church of God saves souls through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Matthew 8:28-34 >

"When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, 'What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?' Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So the demons begged Him, saying, 'If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine.' And He said to them, 'Go.' So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region."

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The soul bound by sin and condemnation must meet the Master of life

When Jesus came to the country of Gergesenes, two demon-possessed men came out from among the tombs. Living people were dwelling in the abode of the dead, and they were so exceedingly fierce that no one could pass that way. The evil spirits had cut them off from the community of life, held them fast in the place of death, and made them people who harmed themselves and their neighbors.

In reading this event, we must not conclude that everyone who suffers a disease of the body or mind is demon-possessed. The passage records an actual case of people seized by evil spirits, but it does not say that every illness has the same cause. To carelessly brand a suffering person spiritually does not accord with the Lord's compassion. We should help him receive the medical care and protection he needs, and pray with him instead of condemning him.

But the spiritual reality this event shows is clear. Sin pulls people away from God and from life, and Satan's lies drag people in the direction of death. Even if the flesh is alive and moving, if there is sin in the heart and one is under God's judgment, he is spiritually a dead person. Paul said, *"And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1–2).*

People suppose they think and act freely, but without knowing the truth they follow the ways of the world, their own lusts, and false teachings. To deceive oneself that one has no sin when one does, or conversely to believe one is still a sinner when Jesus has removed all sin—both are the result of accepting lies

over the word of God. Like the two men who lived among the tombs, the soul bound by sin and condemnation must meet Jesus Christ, the Master of life.

Evil spirits make people follow lies and lusts rather than the truth

Satan's most fearful weapon is not a visible form but lies. Jesus said of the devil, *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44).*

The devil tells people not to believe the word of God but to believe their own thoughts. He deceives them that even a believer in Jesus remains a sinner until he dies, and teaches that the day's sins are washed only by daily prayers of repentance. He speaks of the blood of the Cross while hiding the fact that Jesus received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Jesus bore those sins of the world, was judged on the Cross, died shedding His blood, and completed salvation by rising from death. Take this whole flow away, and a person may practice religion his whole life yet never solve the sin of his heart, living as a slave of condemnation and fear.

Evil spirits also chain the human heart to earthly things alone. They make people regard becoming rich, being healed, and gaining a name as the whole of faith. They leave people with no interest in the remission of sins and everlasting life, and make them use even the church as a tool for their own desires. Material things and health are not evil in themselves, but when they climb

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above God and the soul, a person can run down the slope of destruction like the herd of swine, chasing only the food before his eyes.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit shatters these lies with the word. Man's sins are not removed by religious effort; they were transferred to Jesus Christ and judged, and were completely resolved when Jesus Christ rose from death. When one believes this truth, Satan can no longer use sin as his ground to dominate or condemn that person's heart.

Even the demon-possessed knew that Jesus is the Son of God

When the demons saw Jesus, they cried out, *"What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God?" (Matthew 8:29)* They knew that Jesus is the Son of God, and they knew that He has the authority to judge in the time to come. But the knowledge of who Jesus is did not save them. They neither loved Jesus nor obeyed His word; they feared judgment and tried to escape their situation.

Today as well, many call Jesus the Son of God and acknowledge the Cross and the resurrection as doctrine. But if sin remains in your heart, you must examine what you are believing. Knowing the name of Jesus and reciting Christian doctrine is one thing; believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart and actually receiving the remission of sins is another.

Saving faith is accepting, just as the word says, how Jesus dealt with my sins: that Jesus received all my sins onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, that bearing those sins He was judged in my place on the Cross,

dying and shedding His blood, and that by rising from death He saved me completely from sin and death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and when we believe this gospel, the sins of the heart disappear.

Doing good deeds, fasting, and repeating prayers of repentance out of fear of judgment is not saving faith. Fear is the conscience's evidence that sin has not yet been dealt with. When we believe the righteousness God has accomplished, sin disappears and the Holy Spirit comes upon the heart. Then a person becomes, not a slave who serves God for dread of punishment, but a sinless child who calls God Father.

Jesus is God who judges the powers of life and death with His word

The demons begged Jesus to let them enter the herd of swine. When Jesus said, *"Go,"* they came out at once and went into the swine. Jesus neither bargained with the evil spirits nor performed any elaborate ritual. He commanded with the word, and the demons submitted to the authority of that word.

Jesus is not merely a prophet with power. He is the Creator God who made the visible and invisible worlds with the word, the King of kings. Evil spirits, too, are creatures and cannot defy the command of the Creator. The event at Gergesenes reveals that Jesus is not just a teacher who heals diseases, but the Son of God who judges Satan and the power of death.

But we must not look for the fundamental way out of the oppression of evil spirits in loud shouting or religious rituals. If sin remains in the heart, Satan makes use of that sin and condemnation. What a person needs first is to hear and believe the accurate gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the

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remission of all the sins of his heart. When the word of truth enters the heart, lies lose their place to stand.

Jesus destroyed the power of the devil through death. It says, *"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14–15)*. Jesus received sins onto Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and rose from death, overcoming sin, death, and the power of the devil.

Evil spirits use delusion to lead people to destruction

When the demons entered the swine, the whole herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea and perished. The evil spirits never meant to keep the herd alive. They sought a dwelling to enter, but in the end they drove the herd to death. The desires and false promises Satan gives people are the same. At first they seem to bring profit and pleasure, but the end is destruction and death.

A pig is a beast that looks for food on the ground rather than lifting its head to look at the sky. The original sermons on chapter 8 liken this figure to the heart of the person who seeks only the things of the world rather than everlasting life—the heart that will discard even the truth to gain money, power, and fame, and uses even the church and the gospel for its own success. When Satan's lies enter such a heart, a person heads for destruction while deluding himself that he is succeeding.

Using the things of the world and becoming a slave of the world are different. The righteous who have received the remission of sins also eat, dress, work, and care for their families. The church also needs literature, technology, and material things to preach the gospel. But all these must be tools for the work of saving souls. If one discards the truth for fleshly gain or makes light of the salvation of a single soul, the master and the servant have changed places.

Satan does not usually destroy a person in an instant; he drives him toward the world little by little. He steals away the hours for hearing the word, makes one's own feelings and interests look larger than the gospel, and at last brings the heart to the point of asking Jesus to leave. Therefore the righteous who have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit must examine before the word what their hearts are treasuring more.

The people of Gergesenes counted the loss of the swine greater than the two souls

When those who tended the swine went into the city and reported everything, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. Yet seeing the two men made whole, they did not ask the Lord to stay. They begged Jesus to leave their region. To them, the loss of the herd of swine weighed more than the joy of two souls brought back to life.

This is the judgment of those who look only at the flesh. If the two men who had long terrified the town had been made whole, they should have given thanks and rejoiced. They should have brought more of the sick and the sinners to the Lord. But fearing that their property would suffer more loss if Jesus remained, they pushed away the Lord of life.

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Jesus said, *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26)* One soul is more precious than the riches of the whole world. However great the herd of swine, it cannot be exchanged for the everlasting life of one soul. Property can be gained again, but for the soul that dies having refused the gospel there is no second chance.

We too can judge like the people of Gergesenes. We can begrudge the time and money spent for one person to receive the remission of sins, and feel the loss of face in preaching the gospel more keenly than the joy of it. If a saved person pushes away the work of the gospel for his own gain, he must turn his thinking around—not to receive the remission of sins again, but to set his priorities right as a righteous person who knows how precious the life he has first received is.

Jesus has delivered us from the power of darkness through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

We too were originally dead in trespasses and sins, people who followed the ways of the world and the lies of Satan. But God did not leave us as we were. He sent Jesus Christ, true God and true man, and saved us from the power of darkness.

At the Jordan River, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of all mankind, and thereby received all the sins of the world onto His own body. Bearing those sins He went to the Cross, received God's judgment in our place, dying and shedding His blood, and in three days He rose from death, accomplishing our salvation completely. Whoever believes in the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, His blood on the Cross, His death, and His resurrection receives the

remission of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The Scriptures say, *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:13–14).* Salvation is not a state straddling darkness and light. God has delivered us out of the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Our status has changed: from sinner to righteous, from slave of the devil to child of God.

This is the righteousness of God. God removed sin in a just way. He had the sins transferred through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, judged those sins justly on the Cross so that Jesus died shedding His blood, and raised Him from death, bringing sinners to life. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God's justice that dealt with sin completely and God's love that brought sinners to life appear together.

Therefore the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit need not accept Satan's condemnation. When we discover the shortcomings of our flesh, we should admit the wrong and turn from it, but we must not believe that sin has arisen in our hearts again because of those shortcomings. Our sins were already transferred to Jesus Christ and judged. The righteous person is not one who believes in his own works but one who believes the word of God who has removed all sins.

The Church of God is the channel of life that leads souls to Jesus Christ

Seeing how hard it was for the demon-possessed to come to Jesus on their own, the original sermon on chapter 8 stresses that the Church of God must play the role of leading souls to the Lord.

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The Church is not the Savior; Jesus Christ alone is the Savior. But the Church is the channel of life that preserves and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit the Savior accomplished, so that sinners may meet Jesus.

Unless one is born again of water and the Spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God. It is written, *"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5)*. What the Church must do first is not train people into good religious people, but preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately so that they receive the remission of all sins and are born again of the Spirit.

If the church pursues only worldly success and scale, it becomes no different from an organization tending the swine herds of Gergesenes. If it gives offices to people with sin in their hearts and demands only offerings and service without preaching the gospel of the remission of sins, it has abandoned its mission of leading souls to the Lord of life. The church must not seek people's wealth but serve so that their souls receive the remission of sins.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit there is the power of God that saves people. It says, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith'" (Romans 1:16–17)*. The power of the church lies not in human eloquence and organization but in this gospel in which the righteousness of God is revealed.

The righteous who have received the remission of sins must treasure souls more than riches

To treasure souls does not mean despising the life of the flesh or throwing away one's property recklessly. The righteous should work honestly, care for their families, and manage the material things entrusted to them wisely. Only, they do not use their health, time, talents, and material things for themselves alone, but use them so that even one more soul may hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This order must not be reversed. We do not receive the remission of sins because we have preached much and given material things. Jesus received all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, dying and shedding His blood, and rose from death, saving us first. It is the person who has received the remission of sins freely by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit who serves souls out of thankfulness.

What are you looking at as greater? One soul being released from sin and condemnation, or the small gain you might lose? The joy of the gospel being preached, or the discomfort of your name and face being lowered? The righteous who have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit must judge the opposite way from the people of Gergesenes: the two souls over the herd of swine, and the everlasting life of one person over the riches of the whole world.

Do not condemn the person still shut up in tomb-like sin and fear. Lead him so that he can hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and preach it to him step by step from the Scriptures until he understands. Satan's lies and man's stubbornness cannot be broken by our persuasiveness, but the word of the gospel Jesus Christ has completed moves the one who believes from

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darkness into life.

The Lord crossed the storm-tossed sea to go to the two men of Gergesenes. He has entrusted this gospel of life to us as well. The righteous who have received the remission of sins do not pursue their own righteousness by works; they believe the righteousness of God already completed, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and preach this gospel to other souls. This is what the Church of God must do, and the life of faith the person saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live. ✉

◇ Next in the Series: “Matthew Volume 3”

Following this book, the third volume of the Matthew Biblical Exposition & sermon series, which examines Matthew chapters 9 through 13 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, will be published soon.

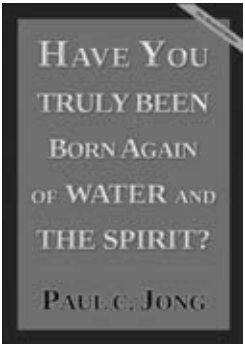
> ***Matthew Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (III)***

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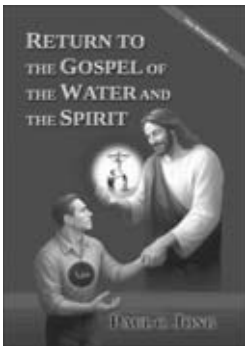
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

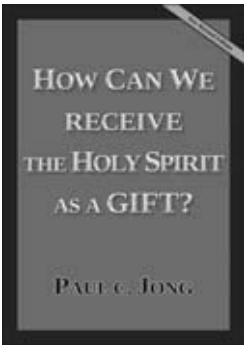
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

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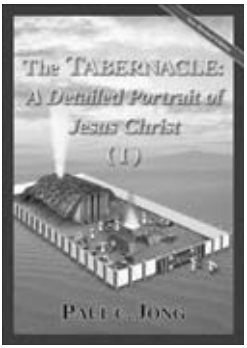
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



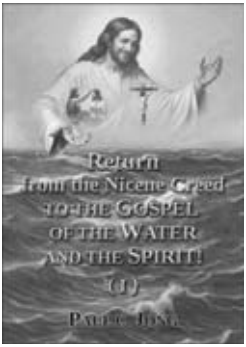
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

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.

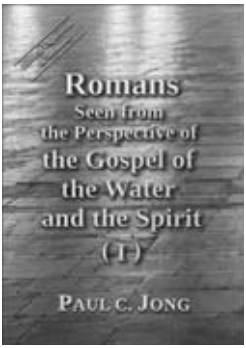
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching 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)



The four Gospels record the ministry of Jesus, who came into this world, called His disciples, preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven with them, and saved sinners. Matthew chapters 1–4 testify that He is the promised King and Savior, through the genealogy and birth of Jesus, the ministry of John the Baptist, the baptism and temptation of Jesus, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven and the calling of the disciples.

At the center of these accounts is the baptism of Jesus recorded in Matthew 3:13–17. Through this baptism, all the sins of the world were passed on to Jesus, the Holy Spirit came down upon Him, and God the Father testified that He was His beloved Son. Jesus received on the Cross the judgment for the sins He had borne and rose again to complete salvation.

Believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with your heart, receive the remission of all sins, and discover the joy and freedom that the children of God enjoy.

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)

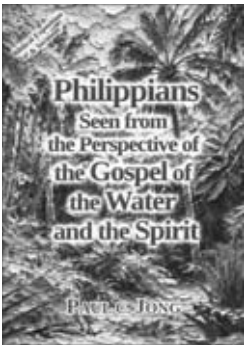


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who is to come.

This book is a Bible study 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.

Philippians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit



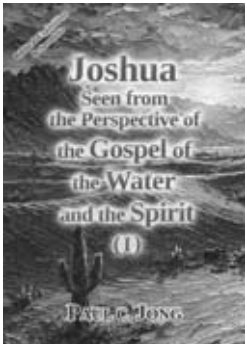
This book offers a fresh understanding of the Epistle to the Philippians from the perspective of the 'gospel of the water and the Spirit.' When we hold fast to the truth that Jesus took the sins of the whole world upon Himself by being baptized by John, suffered judgment on the Cross, and was resurrected, the true source of Paul's joy becomes absolutely clear.

Paul discarded everything he once boasted of as rubbish, proclaiming instead the righteousness received from God through faith alone. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have already been delivered from sin and granted citizenship in heaven. Even though our flesh is weak, we are never again placed under condemnation; this is the root of true joy that remains unshaken in any circumstance.

Salvation has been accomplished completely, once and for all. Now, we must believe in this gospel with all our hearts and live boldly, sharing it in our new life. This book serves as a clear guide along that path.

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)

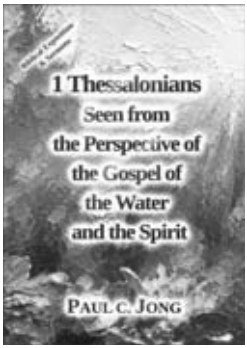


The Book of Joshua is often read as the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan and its victories in war. But the heart of Joshua chapters 1 through 12 is not human courage or strength; it is God's salvation. It shows how God leads sinners across the Jordan into the land of promise and makes them enjoy 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.

1 Thessalonians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit



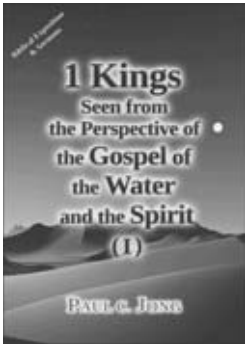
The young church in Thessalonica, established not long before, might well have collapsed under the persecution that pressed in from every side; yet with firm faith, love, and hope it carried the gospel throughout the whole region. What kept these weak people from falling? It was not a religion delivered in word only, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which came in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.

This book opens the five chapters of First Thessalonians anew with that very gospel. It is the gospel by which Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sin of the world, was judged in our place for that sin on the cross, and rose again from death, delivering us from sin and death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the power of God that turns a sinner into a righteous one, and turns the fear of death into living hope.

If you desire a faith unshaken in the last days, open this book. Here is the sure word by which you receive the remission of sins—life and true comfort for you.

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)

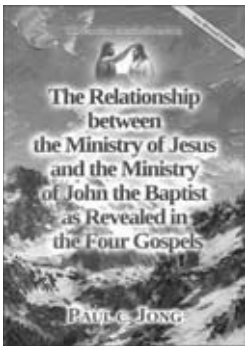


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures 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.

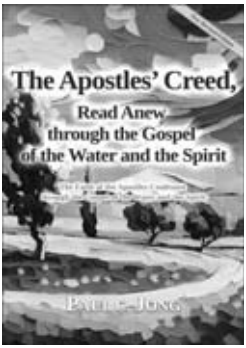
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through 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]

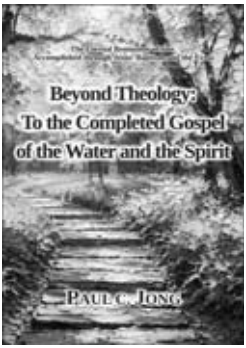


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission 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 (Coming Soon)



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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Pastor PAUL C. JONG

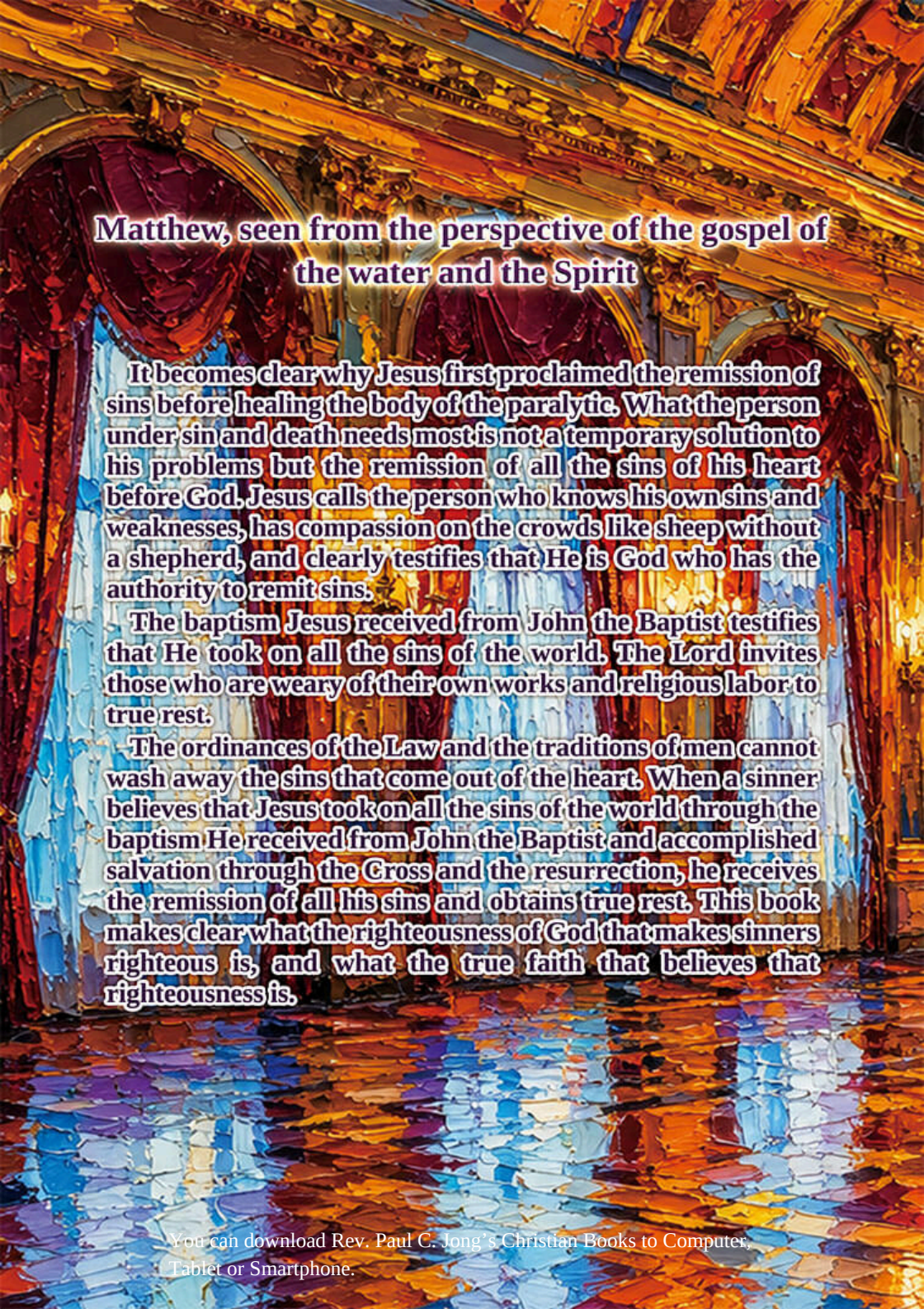
Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 90-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

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Matthew, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

It becomes clear why Jesus first proclaimed the remission of sins before healing the body of the paralytic. What the person under sin and death needs most is not a temporary solution to his problems but the remission of all the sins of his heart before God. Jesus calls the person who knows his own sins and weaknesses, has compassion on the crowds like sheep without a shepherd, and clearly testifies that He is God who has the authority to remit sins.

The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist testifies that He took on all the sins of the world. The Lord invites those who are weary of their own works and religious labor to true rest.

The ordinances of the Law and the traditions of men cannot wash away the sins that come out of the heart. When a sinner believes that Jesus took on all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and accomplished salvation through the Cross and the resurrection, he receives the remission of all his sins and obtains true rest. This book makes clear what the righteousness of God that makes sinners righteous is, and what the true faith that believes that righteousness is.

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