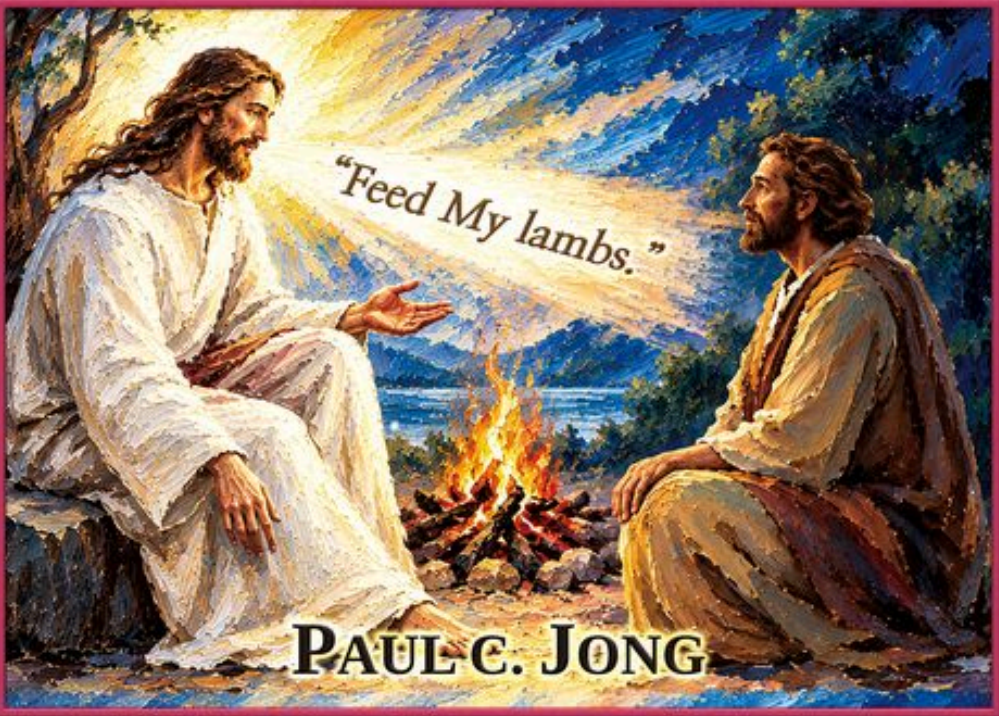
Biblical Exposition & Sermons

John

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



PAUL C. JONG



John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (IV)

Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Hephzibah

“When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13)

As He faced the Cross, Jesus promised His disciples that He would send the Helper, the Holy Spirit, after He departed. The Holy Spirit is the One who makes clear the truth of the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished and reveals Christ’s glory.

Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist; bearing those sins, He was judged and died on the Cross; and by rising from the dead, He completed salvation. The Holy Spirit bears witness in people’s hearts that this gospel of the water and the Spirit is God’s perfect salvation. The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of those who, by believing in this gospel, have no sin in their hearts, and He guides them to understand, believe, and keep the Word and to preach the gospel to the world.

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and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

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

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John
Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (IV)

PAUL C. JONG

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John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (IV)

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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.

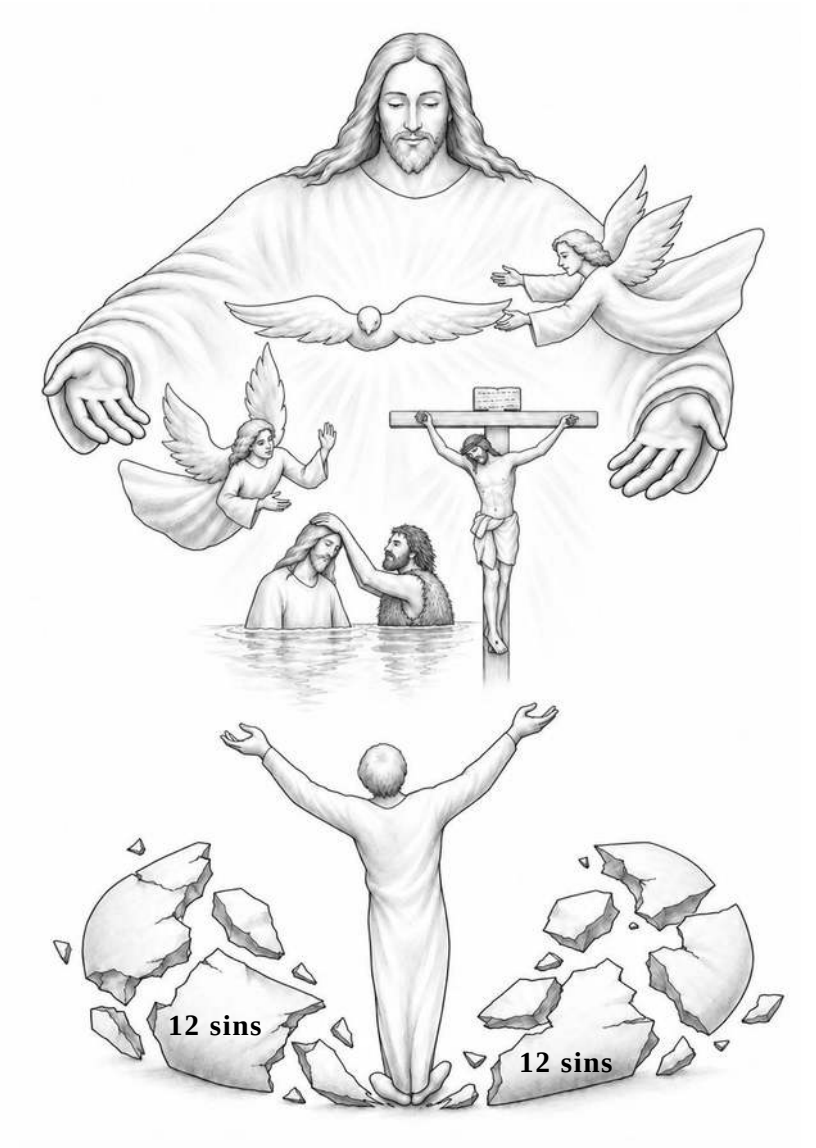
I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

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

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

People long for peace, yet they cannot escape from the fear of sin and death. Even when they obtain what they want in the world and their difficult problems are solved, the anxiety deep in their hearts does not disappear. It is because a sinner can neither remove his sins by his own strength nor overcome judgment and death. True peace does not come from the circumstances of the world becoming better, but from meeting the Savior who has solved the problem of sin and death, and from believing in the salvation He has accomplished.

John chapters 16 through 21 show how Jesus completed the work of saving sinners and how He leads those who believe in that salvation. Jesus had already borne all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and before the Cross He promised the disciples the Holy Spirit, the Helper, and prayed for them. Then, bearing the sin He had taken upon Himself, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of that sin. He declared, *"It is finished!"* and rose again from death. After He rose again, He gave the disciples peace and told them to preach the gospel, to feed His sheep, and to follow Him.

Jesus Christ, the Savior who has overcome the world

Jesus is not One who was crucified in submission to the

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power of men. He is the Son of God, whom God the Father sent; He is the King of kings and the Christ, who came into the world to testify of the truth. Jesus knew everything that would come upon Him, yet He did not avoid the cup the Father had given Him, but of His own will went the way of the Cross in order to save sinners.

By receiving baptism from John in the Jordan River, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all and bore it. And bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, and so received the judgment of sin in our place. That Jesus said, *"It is finished!"* means that He fully accomplished the work of saving sinners according to the will of God the Father, and completed His saving love toward mankind.

Just as He had said, Jesus rose again from death on the third day. By this He revealed that He is the Christ, the Son of God, that He is the Lord of the resurrection and the life, and that He is God, who gives eternal life to those who believe. This salvation that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which brings sinners to life.

The Spirit of truth testifies of the salvation Jesus accomplished and leads those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit into all truth. The Holy Spirit makes people realize that not believing in Jesus is sin, that Jesus has completed the salvation that makes sinners righteous, and that Satan, the ruler of this world, has been judged. The peace the saints enjoy and the faith that overcomes the world do not come from their own resolve or ability, but from believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

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A life of believing in salvation and following the Lord

In chapter 16, Jesus tells the disciples beforehand about the persecution they would undergo and tells them not to stumble. He also promises that the Holy Spirit, the Helper, would come and convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment, and would lead the disciples into all truth. The disciples would have sorrow for a while because of the death of Jesus, but when they saw the risen Lord again, they would obtain a joy that no one could take from them. Therefore Jesus tells them to have peace in Him, who has overcome the world, and to be of good cheer even in the midst of tribulation.

Chapter 17 records the prayer of Jesus before the Cross. Jesus says that eternal life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom God sent. To know Jesus Christ is to know and believe that He is the Son of God and the Christ, who saved sinners with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Jesus prayed that the disciples would be sanctified by the truth, become one, and preach the gospel in the world.

In chapter 18, Jesus of His own will goes out before those who came to seize Him and says that He must drink the cup the Father has given Him. The fact that Jesus did not resist but was seized and questioned was not because He had any sin or lacked strength. It was because, having borne all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He was to receive the judgment of that sin in our place on the Cross. Before Pilate, too, Jesus made clear that He is a King and that He came into the world to testify of the truth.

In chapter 19, Jesus suffers scourging and mocking and is nailed to the Cross wearing the crown of thorns. That the soldiers

divided the clothes of Jesus, that Jesus said He was thirsty, and that a soldier pierced His side with a spear—all these things came to pass just as the word of the Bible had said. That Jesus declared, *"It is finished!"* means that He received on the Cross the judgment for all the sin of mankind that He had borne with the baptism He received from John, and completed the work of saving sinners. By giving even His own life, the Lord fully accomplished the love that saves us from sin, judgment, and destruction.

Chapter 20 continues with the empty tomb and the testimonies of those who met the risen Jesus. Jesus says to the disciples, who had shut the doors in fear, *"Peace be with you,"* and sends them into the world just as the Father sent Him. To Thomas He says not to be an unbelieving person but a believing one, and says that those who have not seen and yet have believed are blessed. All these records are so that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we may have life in His name.

In chapter 21, the risen Jesus tells the disciples, who had caught nothing all night, to cast the net on the right side of the boat, and prepares bread and fish and feeds them. Then He asks Peter three times, *"Do you love Me?"* and tells him to feed and tend His sheep, and then says, *"Follow Me."*

Peter could love the Lord because he knew and believed in the love of Jesus, who had removed even all his sins and faults. To Peter, who had such faith, the Lord entrusted His sheep. To feed the sheep of the Lord is to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and to serve the souls who have received the remission of sins so that they may grow in the word. To follow the Lord, too, is not to put forward the righteousness of men, but to believe in and preach the righteousness of God and to live for other souls.

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In this way, John chapters 16 through 21 begin with the promise of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of Jesus, and go on to the salvation He accomplished on the Cross, the resurrection, peace, and the mission of preaching the gospel. Those who believe in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection receive the remission of sins, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and become the children of God. They also enjoy peace in the Lord, who has overcome the world, and, following the leading of the Holy Spirit, preach the gospel and serve the souls the Lord has entrusted to them.

The way to read this book

This book is structured to examine the Word in John Chapters 16 through 21 through 'Biblical Exposition,' 'Questions and Answers,' and sermons by Pastor Paul C. Jong. In the Biblical Exposition, following the events and the word of each chapter, we examine who Jesus is and what salvation He accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. In the Questions and Answers, the main verses and themes of each chapter are confirmed again, and in the sermons that follow, we examine how the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit appears in the life of the saints, in the church, and in the spread of the gospel.

When you read this book, I ask that you not look at the suffering, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus only as events of the past. I ask that you believe in your heart the fact that when Jesus received baptism from John, all my sins also passed on to Him, and that by bearing those sins, being judged on the Cross, and then rising again from death, He completed my salvation. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

receive the remission of all the sins in their hearts and obtain the peace and the eternal life that the Holy Spirit gives.

The risen Lord gave the disciples peace and sent them out to preach the gospel, and told Peter to feed His sheep and to follow Him. Those who know the perfect salvation and love of the Lord preach to other souls the gospel of life they have received, serve those souls with the word, and follow the Lord by faith.

I hope that this fourth volume will help you, the readers, to know and believe more clearly in Jesus Christ, who has overcome the world. It is my earnest wish that you would believe in your heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and so obtain the remission of sins and eternal life, and that, in the peace the Lord gives, you would receive the leading of the Holy Spirit, preach the gospel, and follow the Lord by faith. ✉

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16

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John Chapter 16 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In John 16:1–11, what persecution will the disciples receive, and what is the work of the Holy Spirit, the Helper?

John 16:1–11 is the word in which Jesus, facing the Cross, told His disciples in advance about the persecution that would come upon them, and promised that after He rose again from death and went to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit, the Helper. Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, the Holy Spirit clearly testifies of what sin is, what the righteousness of God is, and who has been judged.

1. Jesus spoke of persecution in advance so that the disciples would not stumble

Jesus said:

"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble" (John 16:1).

Jesus did not say that the disciples would be welcomed by everyone when they preached the gospel. Rather, He let them know that they could be rejected by people, driven out of religious groups, and even have their lives threatened.

This was not a word meant to frighten the disciples, but a word

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meant to keep them from being discouraged or departing from the faith when persecution actually came. If the disciples remembered what Jesus had told them in advance, they could hold on to the gospel of the water and the Spirit without thinking persecution strange.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also has no need to think that his faith is wrong just because hardship has come. The persecution one receives for believing in the work of salvation of Jesus and in that gospel is something the Lord has already spoken of.

2. One can persecute the people of God while thinking that one is serving God

Jesus said:

"They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service" (John 16:2).

Here, *"put you out of the synagogues"* means to drive you out of the synagogue and the Jewish religious community. At that time, the Jewish religious leaders persecuted Jesus and His disciples even while thinking that they themselves were serving God.

Having religious zeal does not necessarily mean serving God rightly. If one does not know Jesus, the Son of God, and the salvation He accomplished, one can rather oppose the gospel with one's own thoughts and religious standards.

Jesus made the reason clear: *"These things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me."* A person who knows God the Father rightly believes in the Son whom God has sent, and accepts the salvation that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection.

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3. The word of Jesus makes us keep our faith in the midst of tribulation

By telling the disciples in advance what was going to happen, Jesus made them remember the word of the Lord at that time.

When a person is persecuted while preaching the gospel, he can become afraid and discouraged. But if he remembers the fact that the Lord spoke of it in advance, he can look at that situation with faith. He comes to know that the opposition of the world cannot nullify the truth of the gospel, and that, rather, the word of Jesus is being fulfilled just as He said.

Therefore, a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make his own feelings or his surrounding circumstances the standard of his faith. He holds on to the salvation Jesus accomplished and to the written word, and keeps his faith.

4. The hearts of the disciples were filled with sorrow because Jesus was leaving

When Jesus said that He was going to the Father, the hearts of the disciples were filled with sorrow. The disciples thought only of the fact that Jesus was leaving them, and they did not sufficiently realize what salvation would be accomplished through His departure.

But on the way Jesus was going to the Father, there were the death on the Cross, the resurrection, and the ascension. Jesus first had all the sins of the world transferred to His body once and for all with the baptism He received from John. And bearing those sins, He went to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and He rose again from the dead.

That Jesus was going to the Father means that He would complete the work of saving sinners and return to the throne of God. To the disciples it looked like sorrow, but it was the way to complete the salvation of mankind.

5. The reason why it was to the advantage of the disciples that Jesus was leaving

Jesus said:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7).

While Jesus was with the disciples in the flesh, He led the disciples in one place. But after He completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection and went to the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit, the Helper, to dwell in the hearts of all who believe.

The Helper means the One who helps. The Holy Spirit dwells in the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, makes him realize the salvation Jesus accomplished, and helps him believe that word. He also guides the saints so that they may keep and preach the gospel and live according to the will of God.

6. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment

Jesus said:

"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8).

That the Holy Spirit convicts the world means that He makes

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clear, through the word of God, what sin, righteousness, and judgment—which people had understood by human standards—are.

People think that only acts that break the law are sin, think that doing many good deeds is righteousness, and consider that they themselves will not be judged. But the Holy Spirit makes sin, righteousness, and judgment clear, centering on the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished.

— Sin is not believing in Jesus Christ and the salvation He accomplished.

— Righteousness is the right work of God that Jesus accomplished in order to save sinners.

— Judgment is that the ruler of this world, that is, Satan the devil, who held the power of sin and death, has been judged.

7. Of sin—not believing in Jesus is sin

Jesus said:

“Of sin, because they do not believe in Me” (John 16:9).

People break the law of God and commit countless sins as they live. But Jesus had all the sin that mankind committed transferred to His body with the baptism He received from John, and He bore the punishment of that sin on the Cross.

The fundamental sin that leads a person to destruction is not believing in Jesus even though He has thus borne all sins and even received the judgment. Believing in Jesus does not mean merely acknowledging the fact that He existed or the fact that He died on the Cross.

It means accepting with one’s heart that Jesus is the Son of God and the Creator, that He had all our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, and that He is the

Savior who received the judgment of those sins in our place on the Cross and rose again from the dead.

Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit makes it clear that the greatest sin of a person is not believing in the salvation God has accomplished.

8. Of righteousness—the salvation Jesus accomplished is the righteousness of God

Jesus said:

"Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more" (John 16:10).

Here, righteousness does not refer to the good deeds or religious merits of human beings, but to the right work of God that Jesus did in order to save sinners.

Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John. And on the Cross, He completely paid the price of sin with His own blood and death. By rising again from the dead, He overcame sin and death, and after completing the work of salvation, He returned to the Father.

That Jesus went to the Father shows that the work of salvation has been completed. God accepted the work the Son accomplished as perfect righteousness. Therefore, a person who believes in this salvation with his heart receives the remission of sins and becomes righteous, not by his own deeds, but through the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

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9. Of judgment—the ruler of this world has been judged

Jesus said:

"Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:11).

The ruler of this world refers to Satan the devil, who has ruled over people with sin and lies. The devil made people commit sin, condemned them on the basis of those sins, and dragged them to death and judgment.

But Jesus bore all the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and so He removed the basis on which the devil had condemned people. The death and resurrection of Jesus are the victory over sin, death, and the power of the devil.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is no longer under the condemnation of the devil. It is because Jesus has already received the judgment for all his sins. In contrast, a person who rejects this salvation to the end comes to eternal judgment together with the ruler of this world, whom Jesus has judged.

10. The work of the Holy Spirit is to testify of the work of salvation of Jesus

The Holy Spirit is not One who only stirs up emotional excitement or mystical experiences in people. Through the written word of God, the Holy Spirit makes clear who Jesus Christ is and in what way He saved sinners.

The Holy Spirit testifies of the following facts:

— Jesus is the Son of God and God the Creator.

— Jesus bore all the sins of the world with the baptism He

received from John.

— Jesus received the judgment of sin in our place on the Cross.

— Jesus rose again from the dead and became the eternal Savior.

— A person who believes in this salvation with his heart receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and confirms that his faith is a faith that accords with the word of God. He also makes the truth about sin, righteousness, and judgment continue to be preached to the world through the Church of God.

Conclusion

John 16:1–11 is a warning and a comfort given to the disciples who were in the midst of persecution, and it is the word about the work that the Holy Spirit, the Helper, does.

By telling the disciples in advance that they would be driven out and persecuted because of the gospel, Jesus kept them from stumbling. And He promised that after He completed salvation with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection and went to the Father, He would send the Holy Spirit, the Helper.

The Holy Spirit makes sin, righteousness, and judgment clear. Sin is not believing in Jesus and the salvation He accomplished; righteousness is the right work of God by which Jesus completely saved sinners with the water and the Spirit; and judgment is that the devil, who held the power of sin and death, has been judged through Jesus Christ.

Therefore, a person who believes in the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit must not stumble in the face of persecution and hardship, but must hold on to the word. Guided by the Holy Spirit who dwells in his heart, he must believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished, and live testifying of this gospel to the world together with the Church of God.

In John 16:12–14, how does the Spirit of truth testify of the work of salvation of Jesus?

John 16:12–14 is the word in which Jesus, facing the Cross, explained to His disciples the work of the Holy Spirit, the Helper. Jesus completed salvation with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, and the Holy Spirit makes the truth of that salvation clear in the hearts of those who believe, and glorifies Jesus Christ.

1. The disciples could not bear all the words of Jesus at that time

Jesus said:

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).

The disciples went about with Jesus and heard many words, but they did not fully realize why Jesus had received baptism from John and why He had to die on the Cross. Nor did they sufficiently understand what would happen after Jesus died and rose again.

It was not because the word of Jesus was lacking that the disciples could not bear it, but because the work of salvation had not yet been completed with the Cross and the resurrection, and

because the time had not yet come for the Holy Spirit to come into their hearts and make its meaning clear.

Jesus knew the weakness of the disciples and did not demand everything at once. He promised that after completing salvation He would send the Holy Spirit and make them realize what He had spoken.

2. The Holy Spirit makes clear the salvation that Jesus completed

Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His body once and for all with the baptism He received from John. And bearing those sins, He went to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and by rising again from the dead, He overcame sin and death.

After all these things had been accomplished, the disciples, guided by the Holy Spirit, came to realize that the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection are connected to one another as one work of salvation.

The Holy Spirit is not One who adds something new to the work of salvation of Jesus. He makes clear in the heart of a person what Jesus has already completed, and makes him believe that this salvation is the salvation for himself. Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit and the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not separated.

3. The Spirit of truth guides us into all truth

Jesus said:

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will

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guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13).

The Holy Spirit is *"the Spirit of truth."* At the center of all the truth into which the Holy Spirit guides us are Jesus Christ and the salvation He accomplished.

The Holy Spirit makes us realize the following truth of salvation:

— Jesus is the Son of God who came to this earth in the flesh.

— Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John.

— Jesus received the judgment of all that sin on the Cross.

— Jesus rose again from the dead and became the eternal Savior.

— A person who believes in this salvation with his heart receives the remission of sins and becomes a child of God.

— The Holy Spirit comes upon and dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins.

Therefore, being guided by the Holy Spirit is not following vague feelings or human thoughts. It is realizing, within the written word, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, believing it, and living according to that word.

4. The Holy Spirit does not speak on His own authority

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit *"will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak."* It means that the Holy Spirit does not speak, according to His own will, some other content that departs from the will of God the Father and of Jesus.

God the Father made a plan to save sinners. Jesus obeyed that

plan and accomplished salvation with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. The Holy Spirit testifies of this salvation, which the Father planned and the Son accomplished.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit do not speak of different ways of salvation. As the one God, They accomplish and testify of the same will and the same truth. Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit always agrees with the word of God and reveals the work of salvation of Jesus Christ.

5. The Holy Spirit makes us discern truth from falsehood through the word

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When that person hears the word of God, the Holy Spirit helps him discern what is the truth of the gospel and what is human thought.

The Holy Spirit keeps us from speaking only of the Cross of Jesus while leaving out why Jesus received baptism. He makes us realize the fact that because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, He bore those sins and was judged on the Cross.

The Holy Spirit confirms in the heart of the believer that this salvation is right, and even when his heart is shaken because of the weakness of the flesh, He brings him back to the word of the gospel. Therefore, a person who is guided by the Holy Spirit makes the written word, rather than his own feelings, the basis of his faith.

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6. *"Things to come"* means that He makes known what God will accomplish

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would tell of things to come. The Holy Spirit made the disciples realize that after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the gospel would be spread, the church would be established, and even if the saints were persecuted, the Lord would finally be victorious.

Also, through the written word, the Holy Spirit gives the saints the hope of the second coming of the Lord, the resurrection, and the eternal kingdom of God. A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not look only at life in this world, but waits for the eternal life and the kingdom of God that the Lord has promised.

Because of this hope, the saints can keep their faith and preach the gospel even in the midst of present suffering. The Holy Spirit helps the saints carry out the work of the gospel entrusted to them today as they look forward to the glory they will receive in the future.

7. The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus

Jesus said:

"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14).

The center of what the Holy Spirit reveals is not the Holy Spirit Himself, but Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit reveals that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who has completely saved sinners.

The glory of Jesus does not lie only in worldly power and honor. It lies in that He bore all the sin of sinners, gave Himself

up as the sacrificial offering, was judged on the Cross, rose again from the dead, and gave eternal life to those who believe.

The Holy Spirit shines this work of salvation that Jesus did into the heart of the person who believes. As a result, that person does not boast of his own deeds and righteousness, but exalts Jesus, who saved him from sin and judgment, and comes to reveal His glory.

8. The Holy Spirit takes of what is Jesus' and declares it to the saints

The word that Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit, *"He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you,"* means that the Holy Spirit makes the saints realize in their hearts the word and the work of Jesus.

What is Jesus' includes His word and His work of salvation, His promises, and eternal life. The Holy Spirit makes us believe the fact that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from the dead.

The Holy Spirit also makes the person who believes in this gospel know that he has become a child of God, and leads him to learn the word and serve the gospel within the Church of God. He gives boldness when one preaches the gospel, makes one remember the word when one meets hardship, and helps one follow the will of the Lord to the end.

Conclusion

John 16:12–14 says that the Holy Spirit makes the work of

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salvation of Jesus Christ clear in the heart of the person who believes, and guides him into all truth.

Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His body once and for all with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, and rose again from the dead. The Holy Spirit testifies that this very gospel of the water and the Spirit is the perfect salvation of God.

The Spirit of truth does not speak a different gospel according to His own will. He makes known the salvation that God the Father planned and Jesus accomplished, and glorifies Jesus. Also, dwelling in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He guides him to realize, believe, and preach the word.

Therefore, the faith that is guided by the Holy Spirit is not a faith that exalts human experience above Jesus. It is a faith that knows more clearly the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, believes that word with the heart, and serves the gospel within the Church of God and testifies of it to the world.

In John 16:15–24, what does the word of Jesus, *"A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me,"* mean?

John 16:15–24 shows how the death and resurrection of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and prayer offered in the name of Jesus are connected to one another. Jesus said that in a little while He would leave the disciples and die on the Cross, but that He would rise again and meet them, and that as a result the sorrow of the disciples would be turned into a joy that no one could take away.

1. The Holy Spirit makes known the will of God the Father and of Jesus

Jesus said:

"All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:15).

The word that all things the Father has are Jesus' shows that the Father and the Son are one, and that Jesus is the true God. The salvation the Father planned and the salvation Jesus accomplished are not different works.

God the Father made a plan to save mankind from sin, and Jesus obeyed that will and accomplished salvation. The Holy Spirit makes known, in the heart of the person who believes, the salvation that the Father planned and the Son accomplished.

Therefore, that the Holy Spirit takes of what is Jesus' and makes it known means that He helps people realize and believe the salvation that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

2. *"A little while, and you will not see Me"* refers to the death of Jesus

Jesus said:

"A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father" (John 16:16).

Jesus spoke of how He would soon be arrested and die on the Cross. Once Jesus was buried in the tomb, the disciples would no longer be able to see Him with the eyes of the flesh.

But the death of Jesus was not a sudden failure. Jesus had already had all the sins of the world transferred to His body once

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and for all with the baptism He received from John. Now He had to bear those sins, go to the Cross, and receive the judgment of sin.

Therefore, in the word *"A little while, and you will not see Me"* is contained the fact that Jesus, as the sacrificial offering that bore the sin of mankind, would be nailed to the Cross and die.

3. *"And again a little while, and you will see Me"* speaks of the resurrection

After dying on the Cross, Jesus rose again on the third day and appeared to His disciples again. Therefore, the word *"and again a little while, and you will see Me"* refers to the resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus is the evidence that the salvation He accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the Cross is perfect. Jesus bore all our sins, paid the full price of those sins on the Cross, and by coming back to life from the dead, He overcame sin and death.

The disciples watched the death of Jesus and thought everything was over, but Jesus rose again and revealed that He is the Lord of life and the Son of God. The faith and hope of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also rest in Jesus, who rose again from the dead.

4. The disciples did not realize the word of Jesus at that time

The disciples asked one another what the word *"A little while"*

meant. Although Jesus had spoken of His death and resurrection several times, the disciples did not sufficiently understand its meaning.

The disciples expected that Jesus would immediately become the king of the world and restore Israel. Therefore, it was hard for them to accept the word that Jesus would die and go to the Father.

But after they saw the Cross and the resurrection with their own eyes and were guided by the Holy Spirit, they clearly realized the word of Jesus. They came to know that Jesus' bearing the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, His dying on the Cross, and His rising again were one perfect salvation connected together.

Today, too, the Holy Spirit makes those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit realize the work of salvation of Jesus.

5. The sorrow of the disciples was turned into joy through the resurrection

Jesus said:

"Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy" (John 16:20).

When Jesus died on the Cross, the disciples wept and lamented. On the other hand, the religious leaders who had opposed Jesus rejoiced, thinking that they had accomplished their will.

But the joy of the world did not last long. It was because Jesus rose again from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus turned the sorrow of the disciples into joy, and revealed that it was not

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those who killed Jesus who had won, but the salvation of God that had triumphed.

The joy of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also comes from the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is because through the death of Jesus the judgment for our sins was ended, and through the resurrection of Jesus we obtained eternal life.

6. After the pain of childbirth comes the joy of new life

Jesus spoke of a woman giving birth as an illustration. When giving birth, she suffers great pain, but once the child is born, she forgets that pain in the joy of having gained a new life.

The suffering Jesus received on the Cross was suffering for saving mankind from sin. Jesus bore our sins and received the punishment of those sins in our place. But it did not end with that death; by rising again, He gave new life to countless sinners.

After the suffering of the Cross came the joy of the resurrection, and through the sacrifice of Jesus, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit received the remission of sins and were born again as children of God. This is the joy of new life that comes after the pain of childbirth.

7. Through the resurrection, we have obtained a joy that no one can take away

Jesus said:

"Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you" (John 16:22).

The joy the world gives can disappear when circumstances change. But the joy that comes from the resurrection of Jesus, no one can take away. It is because the salvation Jesus accomplished can never be revoked or fail.

Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received all the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead. Therefore, a person who believes in this salvation has been saved from sin, condemnation, and eternal judgment.

Even if the flesh is weak and there are hardships in life, the salvation Jesus accomplished does not change. The fundamental joy that a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has is the joy that all his sins have disappeared and that he has obtained eternal life.

8. *"In that day you will ask Me nothing"*

Once Jesus rises again from the dead and the Holy Spirit comes, the disciples will no longer keep asking questions because they fail to understand the words of Jesus, as they did before. It is because the Holy Spirit makes clear the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The disciples come to realize why Jesus received baptism from John, and why He who had no sin died on the Cross. They come to know that because Jesus bore the sin of all people, He was judged on the Cross, and that as a result the sin and judgment of those who believe have completely ended.

The Holy Spirit confirms in the heart of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit the fact that this salvation is true. That is why a saved person makes the word of salvation that Jesus accomplished, rather than his own thoughts

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or feelings, the basis of his faith.

9. We have come to be able to come before God the Father in the name of Jesus

Jesus said:

"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you" (John 16:23).

A sinner cannot come before the holy God with his own righteousness and merits. But Jesus removed all sins and became the Mediator between God and man.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can call God his Father and come before Him through the righteousness Jesus accomplished. Praying in the name of Jesus does not stop at simply saying the name of Jesus at the end of a prayer.

It is coming to God with the faith that believes that Jesus is the Savior who bore all our sins and was judged, and who has made us children of God. In the name of Jesus are contained His divinity, His work of salvation, and His authority.

10. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have received the privilege of being able to pray

Jesus said:

"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

A person who has received the remission of sins is a child of

God, and so he can ask God the Father for help. He can pray in the name of Jesus for everything needed for his own problems, the problems of his family, the church, and the spreading of the gospel.

Prayer is not a means of fulfilling one's own desires, but an act of faith that asks God for help in order to accomplish the will of the Lord. It is asking for what is needed in order to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, serve the Church of God, and keep one's faith in the midst of hardship.

The answers to prayer give joy to the saints. It is because they make the saints experience in their actual lives that God is their Father, that Jesus is their Mediator, and that the Holy Spirit is with them.

Conclusion

John 16:15–24 says that through the Cross and the resurrection of Jesus, the sorrow of the disciples was turned into joy, and that those who believe have come to be able to come before God the Father in the name of Jesus.

Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His body once and for all with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, and rose again from the dead. Therefore, the death of Jesus is not a failure but the completion of the salvation that ended sin and judgment, and His resurrection is the victory that gave eternal life to those who believe.

A person who believes in this salvation has a joy that no one can take away. He comes to God not through his own deeds, but through the righteousness Jesus accomplished. He prays in the name of Jesus, and believes that God will supply what is needed

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for the spreading of the gospel and for a life of faith.

Therefore, a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who stays only in sorrow. He is a person who believes in Jesus, who rose again from the dead, and rejoices; who is guided by the Holy Spirit; who prays in the name of Jesus and receives answers; and who fully enjoys that joy.

In John 16:25–33, what did Jesus mean when He said, *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"*?

John 16:25–33 is the last exhortation Jesus gave His disciples as He faced the Cross. Jesus made it clear that He is the Son of God who came from the Father, and He also told them in advance that the disciples would soon be scattered. But greater than their weakness were the salvation and the victory that Jesus would accomplish.

1. Jesus clearly revealed God the Father

Until then, Jesus had spoken to His disciples in parables and figurative language, but He said that when the time came, He would tell them plainly about the Father. The time spoken of here is connected to the time when Jesus would accomplish salvation with the Cross and the resurrection and the Holy Spirit would come upon the disciples.

The disciples had heard the words of Jesus several times, but they had not yet fully understood the whole picture of the

salvation He would accomplish. Only after Jesus rose again from the dead and the Holy Spirit came did they clearly come to know why Jesus had come to this earth, why He had received baptism from John, and why He had died on the Cross and risen again.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth that plainly reveals how God saved sinners. God the Father sent His only begotten Son to this earth; Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His body once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and bearing those sins, He went to the Cross. And by shedding His blood on the Cross and receiving the judgment of sin, and by rising again from the dead, He completed salvation.

2. We have come to be able to come before God in the name of Jesus

Jesus said in verses 26–27:

"In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (John 16:26–27).

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can pray directly to God the Father in the name of Jesus. It is because Jesus opened the way of salvation. A person who had become an enemy of God because of sin becomes a child of God when he believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished and receives the remission of sins.

Therefore, praying in the name of Jesus does not mean simply attaching the name of Jesus at the end of a prayer. It is believing that Jesus removed all our sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection,

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and coming to God with that faith.

The Father Himself loves those who believe in the Son. A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who piles up his own righteousness in fear in order to receive the love of God, but a person who prays as a child who has already received the love of God in Jesus Christ.

3. Jesus came from the Father and accomplished salvation

Jesus spoke of His work in a single sentence:

"I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father" (John 16:28).

In this word, the divinity of Jesus and His work of salvation appear together.

— Jesus is the Son of God who came from the Father.

— He came into the world in the flesh in order to save sinners.

— He bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John.

— He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of sin in our place.

— He rose again from the dead and completed salvation.

— After finishing the work of salvation, He returned to the Father.

Jesus is not a mere religious leader, but the Savior of mankind sent by God the Father. Therefore, believing in Jesus is not merely acknowledging His existence, but accepting with one's heart the work of salvation He accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

4. The disciples' confession contained both faith and weakness

The disciples confessed that they believed that Jesus knew all things and was the One who had come from God. Then Jesus asked them, *"Do you now believe?"*

This word contains the meaning that the confession of the disciples would soon be put to the test. The disciples confessed with their mouths that they believed in Jesus, but when Jesus was arrested, they fell into fear and were all scattered. Matthew 26:56 also records, *"Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled."*

Jesus already knew that the disciples would forsake Him and be scattered. Even so, He did not give up on them. After rising again from the dead, He went to them again, and the disciples who received the Holy Spirit rose up as witnesses who preached the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This shows the fact that our salvation does not depend on the strong resolve or unchanging loyalty of human beings. Even when a believer is weak in the flesh and fails at times, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished does not change. A person who has discovered his own weakness must return to the word of salvation and rely on Jesus again.

5. Even though Jesus seemed to be left alone, He was with the Father

Jesus said that the disciples would all be scattered and leave Him alone. But He went on to say, *"I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."*

The disciples were scattered, but the will of salvation of God the Father and of Jesus was one. Jesus obeyed the will of the

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Father, received baptism from John, and went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world. Neither the rejection of the people nor the flight of the disciples could stop that will of salvation.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also sometimes feel as if they have been left alone in the world. But the Lord is present within the person who has received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit as a gift. The faith that the Lord is with us holds the saints up even in the midst of tribulation.

6. The peace we enjoy in the Lord begins with the remission of sins

Jesus made clear in verse 33 the purpose for which He had spoken all these words:

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

The peace Jesus gives is not a state in which there is no hardship at all. It is enjoying peace in Jesus even while having tribulation in the world.

The foundation of this peace is the remission of sins. If there is sin in a person's heart, he cannot help but fear the judgment of God. But when we believe that Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins in our place on the Cross, our relationship of enmity with God comes to an end.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1).

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit enjoys peace on the basis of the written word of salvation,

not on the basis of feelings or circumstances. He believes the fact that Jesus has removed all sins more strongly than the fact that he himself is lacking.

7. Because Jesus has overcome the world, those who believe also overcome by faith

Facing the Cross, Jesus declared, *"I have overcome the world."* Jesus overcame the sin of the world, death, and the power of Satan. He bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, paid the full price of sin on the Cross, and by rising again from the dead, He achieved complete victory.

That the saints overcome the world does not mean that they change all their circumstances as they wish by their own strength. It is accepting by faith the victory Jesus has already achieved, and not abandoning that gospel even in the midst of tribulation and temptation.

1 John 5:4–6 makes this faith clear:

"For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood –ASV" (1 John 5:4–6).

Therefore, the faith that overcomes the world is not vague positive thinking or human self-confidence. It is the faith that believes the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, came by water and blood and removed all our sins. With this faith, the saints overcome the condemnation of sin, overcome the temptations and persecution of the world, and live a life of serving the gospel.

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Conclusion

John 16:25–33 shows the fact that Jesus is the Son of God who came from the Father, and the Savior who saved sinners. The disciples confessed that they believed in Jesus, but when tribulation struck, they were scattered. Yet even the weakness of the disciples could not stop the salvation that Jesus was accomplishing.

Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His body once and for all with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and went to the Cross, where He shed His blood and was judged, and He rose again from the dead and completed salvation. A person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart receives the remission of sins and enjoys peace with God.

Tribulation and weakness come to the saints, too. But because Jesus, who has overcome the world, is with them, they are not alone. To believe in the salvation Jesus completed rather than in one's own strength, to enjoy peace in the Lord, and to serve the gospel boldly—this is the faith that this word teaches. ✉

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 16

[Question] 1. What is John chapter 16 made up of, and what is its central message?

John chapter 16 is the continuation of the farewell words that Jesus spoke to His disciples as He faced the Cross. Jesus spoke about the tribulation the disciples would go through after He left, the work the Holy Spirit would do, how sorrow would be turned into joy through His death and resurrection, and the peace they would enjoy in the Lord who has overcome the world.

First, Jesus foretold that the time would come when the disciples would be driven out of the synagogues, and when even those who killed them would regard their actions as serving God. People do such things because they do not know God the Father and Jesus. Jesus spoke of these things in advance not to frighten the disciples, but so that when tribulation struck, they would remember His word and not stumble.

Jesus said that it was to the advantage of the disciples that He was going to the Father. It is because only after Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, rose again, and went to the Father could the Holy Spirit, the Helper, come. The Holy Spirit reveals to the world the sin of not believing in Jesus, the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished, and the fact that the devil, the ruler of this world, has already been judged. He also guides the saints into all truth, and glorifies Jesus by making clear the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished.

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Next, Jesus said that in *"a little while"* the disciples would not see Him, and that again in *"a little while"* they would see Him. This refers to the death and resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus was hung on the Cross, the disciples would weep and lament, but when they met the risen Jesus again, that sorrow would be turned into joy. Jesus likened this to the pain of a woman in labor and the joy of giving birth. He also promised that if the disciples asked the Father in His name, they would receive answers and their joy would be full. To ask in the name of Jesus is not simply to add His name at the end of a prayer; it is for a person to believe in Jesus, who saved him from sin, and to ask the Father for help as a child of God.

Finally, Jesus revealed that He had come forth from the Father and come into the world, and that now He was leaving the world and going back to the Father. The disciples at last confessed that they believed, but Jesus knew that they would soon be scattered and leave Him alone. Even so, Jesus said that He was not alone, because the Father was with Him.

The purpose for which Jesus spoke all these words was so that the disciples might enjoy peace in Him. In the world they have tribulation, but because Jesus has overcome the power of sin, death, and the devil, those who believe in Him can also be of good cheer. Therefore, John chapter 16 is a chapter that begins with the sorrow of the disciples facing the Cross, passes through the salvation Jesus would accomplish, the work of the Holy Spirit, the Helper, the joy of the resurrection, and the privilege of prayer, and ends with the peace enjoyed in the Lord who has overcome the world.

[Question] 2. John 16:2–3—by what mistaken conviction are those who persecute the people of God gripped?

The greatest prejudice of those who persecute the saints is their conviction that they themselves are serving God rightly, and that even driving out or killing the saints who believe in Jesus is an act of loyalty to God.

Jesus said this:

"They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me" (John 16:2–3).

Here, *"put you out of the synagogues"* means to drive the saints out of the religious community to which they belong. Because the persecutors think that they are keeping the orthodox faith, they judge those who believe in Jesus as if they were people who oppose God. In the end, they come to regard even getting rid of the saints as something God would be pleased with. The seriousness of this prejudice lies in believing that one is doing a righteous thing even while doing an evil thing.

But Jesus made clear the fundamental reason why they act that way: it is *"because they have not known the Father nor Me."* They have zeal for religion and standards of their own, but they do not know who Jesus Christ, whom God the Father sent, is. Nor do they accept the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, that He bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and that He saved sinners with the judgment of the Cross and the resurrection. Because they do not know the salvation of God, they judge even the saints who believe in and preach that salvation as people who are in the wrong.

Therefore, having great religious zeal and a strong

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conviction that one's own actions are right does not mean that one is serving God rightly. If one does not know God the Father and Jesus Christ whom He sent, one can regard one's own thoughts as the will of God and rather persecute the people of God. Regarding it as the will of God to condemn, drive out, and harm others because their faith differs from one's own—this is precisely the distorted prejudice of these people.

Jesus spoke of this in advance so that the saints would not stumble when they were persecuted. Being persecuted does not mean that the faith of the saints is wrong, and having religious authority and justification does not mean that the persecutor is on God's side. The saints must not be shaken by the judgments or threats of people, but must believe in Jesus, who saved them with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

[Question] 3. John 16:4—what was the purpose for which Jesus let the disciples know in advance of the persecution they would go through?

The first reason Jesus spoke to the disciples in advance about the persecution they would receive was so that they would remember His word when it actually came upon them.

"But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you" (John 16:4).

When the disciples were driven out of the synagogues and their lives were threatened, they could have been shaken, wondering whether their faith was wrong or whether God had abandoned them. Moreover, if the persecutors claimed that their actions were serving God, the confusion of the disciples could

have grown even greater. Because Jesus knew all these things, He made them remember that persecution was not something that happened by chance, nor the result of the failure of God's salvation, but something the Lord already knew and had spoken of.

The second reason was so that the disciples would not stumble because of persecution. In verse 1, Jesus said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble."* The disciples who heard the word of the Lord in advance can hold on to that word when they are persecuted. Even if those who persecute them have religious authority and justification, they can discern that those people are not on God's side, but act that way because they do not know the Father and Jesus.

Jesus did not say these things from the beginning because until then He had been with the disciples, protecting and guiding them. But now the time was drawing near for Jesus to return to the Father by way of the Cross and the resurrection. Since He would no longer be with the disciples in the flesh, He let them know in advance what would happen and had the Holy Spirit, the Helper, help them. The Holy Spirit guides the disciples to remember the word of Jesus and hold firmly to the truth.

Therefore, Jesus' foretelling was not meant to frighten the disciples, but to prepare their faith. Even if persecution comes, the salvation Jesus accomplished by bearing the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and by the Cross and the resurrection does not change. The disciples must keep their faith to the end, not by enduring persecution with their own will and resolve alone, but by believing the word given in advance and Jesus, who saved them, and by receiving the help of the Holy Spirit.

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[Question] 4. John 16:7–8—how are the departure of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Helper connected?

Jesus Christ said to His disciples, *"It is to your advantage that I go away."* It is because He said that if He did not go away, the Helper would not come, but if He went, He would send the Helper. Here, the Helper refers to the Holy Spirit. The return of Jesus to the Father and the coming of the Holy Spirit are not separate events, but things that follow one another within the plan of salvation of God.

That Jesus was leaving does not simply mean that He was parting from the disciples. Jesus had to bear all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bear that sin and receive the judgment on the Cross, rise again from the dead, and return to the Father. It is after completing this work of salvation that He sends the Holy Spirit, the Helper. Therefore, the departure of Jesus was a sad thing for the disciples, but it was absolutely necessary for the completion of salvation and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the One who sends the Helper, and the Helper is the One who testifies of and confirms what Jesus accomplished. Jesus said, *"When the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me."* The Holy Spirit does not speak of a new way of salvation unrelated to Jesus, but makes us realize and believe who Jesus is and what He accomplished for sinners. He also brings the words of Jesus to remembrance and guides believers to live according to that word.

The work of the Helper in convicting the world is also entirely connected with Jesus Christ. He convicts of sin because people do not believe in Jesus, and He convicts of righteousness

because Jesus completely accomplished the salvation of sinners and returned to the Father. He convicts of judgment because, through the salvation Jesus accomplished, the devil, the ruler of this world, has already been judged. The Holy Spirit makes a person acknowledge that he is a sinner before God, accept the righteousness Jesus accomplished, and believe that the judgment of the devil and of sin has been carried out.

Therefore, the relationship between Christ and the Helper is the relationship between the One who accomplishes the work of salvation and the One who testifies of that completed salvation and confirms it to those who believe. If Jesus Christ saved sinners with the water and the blood, the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who believes in that salvation, confirms that he is a child of God, and helps him live according to the word. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work in different ways, but they are the one God, accomplishing the same salvation with one heart.

[Question] 5. Explain the three core works of the Holy Spirit shown in John 16:8–15.

Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit, the Helper, came, *"He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."* Here, to convict does not simply mean to rebuke a person for his wrongdoing. It means that the Holy Spirit plainly reveals what sin is, what the righteousness God accomplished is, and who has been judged, so that people may know and believe the truth.

First, the Holy Spirit convicts of sin. Jesus Himself explained, *"Of sin, because they do not believe in Me."* The decisive sin that this passage makes clear is not believing in Jesus Christ.

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God sent His Son to save sinners, and Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Bearing that sin, He received the judgment on the Cross, and He rose again from the dead and became the perfect Savior. The Holy Spirit reveals that not believing in this Jesus and in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished is the sin that leads a person to destruction.

Second, the Holy Spirit convicts of righteousness. Jesus said, *"Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more."* Here, the righteousness of God refers to the right and perfect work that Jesus Christ accomplished in order to save sinners. Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore all the punishment of that sin on the Cross, and after rising again, He returned to the Father. The word that He goes to the Father means that the work of salvation has been completely accomplished. The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation Jesus accomplished is the righteousness of God, and confirms in the heart of the person who believes it that he has received the remission of sins and become righteous.

Third, the Holy Spirit convicts of judgment. Jesus said, *"Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."* The ruler of this world refers to Satan the devil. The devil has ruled over and condemned people, using sin and death as his weapons. But Jesus bore the sin of mankind, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and then rose again, and thereby He broke the power of the devil. Therefore, the Holy Spirit testifies that sin and death have been settled in Jesus Christ, and that the ruler of this world has already been judged. A person who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished is no longer under the condemnation of the devil, and obtains eternal life.

The Holy Spirit does not make up these three facts anew

according to His own will and speak of them. The Spirit of truth guides people into all truth with what the Father planned and Jesus Christ accomplished. He brings to remembrance the words and the work of salvation of Jesus, makes us believe that they are right, and also makes known the things that will come to pass and the eternal hope that believers will enjoy. In this way, the Holy Spirit does not reveal Himself, but glorifies Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the three aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit are: making clear that not believing in Jesus is sin; testifying that the salvation Jesus accomplished is the righteousness of God; and making known that the ruler of this world has been judged through the baptism Jesus received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection. The Holy Spirit makes us realize and believe this truth through the word, and dwelling in the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He guides him into the truth.

[Question] 6. In John 16:9, what does the '*sin*' of which the Holy Spirit convicts the world refer to?

Jesus clearly stated the sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts: *"Of sin, because they do not believe in Me."* What people generally think of as sin is breaking the law of God or doing wrong to other people. Such acts are also sin, but this passage defines the fundamental sin that keeps a person under the judgment of God as not believing in Jesus Christ.

God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth in order to save people who had fallen into sin. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and received all the punishment of sin. And He rose again

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from the dead and became the perfect Savior who saves people from sin and death. The sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts is not accepting the salvation that God has thus completed.

Therefore, believing in Jesus does not stop at calling on His name or acknowledging Him religiously. One must believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Creator, and the Savior who came in the flesh to save sinners. One must also accept with one's heart the fact that Jesus bore all one's sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and gave eternal life by rising again.

The Holy Spirit testifies of this fact through the word. When a person looks only at the shortcomings of his own deeds and tries to solve the problem of sin, the Holy Spirit makes it clear that Jesus Christ has already borne and removed all sins. At the same time, He convicts of how grave a sin it is before God not to believe in and to reject that completed salvation.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished receives the remission of sins and becomes a child of God, and the Holy Spirit confirms in his heart that his faith is right. In contrast, a person who does not believe in Jesus and the salvation He accomplished remains under judgment, still holding his sins as they are. Therefore, the sin of which the Holy Spirit convicts is the unbelief that does not believe in the perfect salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection.

[Question] 7. How does John 16:10 say that the Holy Spirit makes '*righteousness*' clear?

Jesus said, *"Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and*

you see Me no more." Here, righteousness does not mean the human righteousness that a person builds up by acting well. It refers to the right and perfect work of God that Jesus Christ accomplished in order to save sinners. More fundamentally, Jesus Christ, who accomplished that salvation, is Himself the righteousness of God.

Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in the flesh in order to save sinners. Jesus bore the sin of all the people of the world once and for all with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and received all the punishment of sin. And He rose again from the dead, overcame sin and death, and became the perfect Savior. That He thus bore all the sin of sinners and made them sinless is the righteousness of God.

The word that Jesus goes to the Father means that He has completed this work of salvation without leaving anything undone. Jesus did not leave without accomplishing the work of removing sin. After fulfilling all righteousness through the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection, He returned to the Father. Therefore, that Jesus is at the right hand of the Father shows that the work of making sinners righteous has already been completed.

The Holy Spirit testifies of this very righteousness of God to the world. When people try to become righteous by their own good deeds or religious efforts, the Holy Spirit makes it clear through the word that only the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished is perfect righteousness before God. He makes people believe that Jesus bore their sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and makes them realize the fact that His salvation has been completed without any lack.

The Holy Spirit also confirms in the heart of the person who

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believes in this righteousness of God that his faith is right. A person who believes that Jesus bore and removed all his sins accepts the righteousness of Christ by faith and becomes righteous before God. The Holy Spirit dwells in that person, testifies that he has received the remission of sins and become a child of God, and guides him to keep on believing and following the word of God.

Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit concerning righteousness is to make clear that the perfect salvation Jesus Christ accomplished with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection is the righteousness of God, to make people believe in that righteousness and receive the remission of sins, and to confirm in the heart of the believer that he has become righteous. The Holy Spirit does not exalt human righteousness, but glorifies Jesus Christ, who fulfilled all righteousness and returned to the Father.

[Question] 8. In John 16:11, what is the content of the '*judgment*' that the Holy Spirit reveals?

Jesus said, *"Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."* Here, the ruler of this world refers to Satan the devil, who has opposed God and held people under sin and death. Therefore, the judgment of which the Holy Spirit testifies in this passage is first of all the judgment that the devil, the ruler of this world, has received.

From the beginning, the devil made people not believe the word of God and commit sin. When sin entered into people, death followed, and the devil condemned and ruled over people, using sin and death as his weapons. Because people had sin, they could not help but fear judgment and live as slaves of the devil,

unable to escape from death.

But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth in order to destroy the works of the devil. Jesus bore all the sins of the world that the devil had brought upon people with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and received all the punishment and curse of sin, and after saying, *"It is finished!"* He rose again from the dead. As Jesus settled sin and death, the basis and the weapons with which the devil had ruled over people collapsed. This is the judgment that the ruler of this world received.

The Holy Spirit makes clear through the word the fact that the devil has already been judged through the baptism Jesus received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection. When the devil condemns a person who has received the remission of sins and accuses him, saying, "You still have sin and something to be judged for," the Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus has already borne all that person's sins and judgment. A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit accepts this testimony and comes to believe the fact that he has been saved from sin and death and is no longer under the condemnation of the devil.

This testimony of judgment is also a warning to the world. Even though Jesus Christ has judged the devil and saved sinners, a person who does not believe in that salvation continues to belong to the ruler of this world, who has been judged. As a result, he comes together with the devil to the eternal judgment into which the devil will enter. The Holy Spirit makes this fact clear and convicts people so that they may turn from the lies of the devil and believe in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit concerning judgment is to testify that the devil, the ruler of this world, has already been judged through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection. To believers, the Holy

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Spirit confirms the salvation of Jesus, who overcame sin and death, so that they may repel the condemnation of the devil; and to the unbelieving world, He gives warning not to follow the devil, who has been judged, but to return to Jesus Christ, the Savior.

[Question] 9. John 16:14–15—whom does the Holy Spirit glorify, and in what way does He reveal that glory?

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you."* Here, *"He"* refers to the Spirit of truth, and *"what is Mine"* refers to the work of salvation that Jesus spoke of and accomplished, and the promises He gave to those who believe.

The glory of Jesus Christ is not the glory of being exalted in the world or praised by people. It is the glory of the Son of God humbling Himself by coming to this earth in the flesh in order to save sinners. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment. He also rose again from the dead and returned to the Father, and became the perfect Savior. The Holy Spirit makes all these things clear and reveals that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of sinners.

The Holy Spirit is not One who speaks of His own will or of a separate salvation. He shines into the hearts of believers the words Jesus spoke and the work He accomplished on this earth, and makes them realize and believe their meaning. He testifies of how Jesus saved sinners with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection, and confirms in their hearts the fact that this salvation is true and perfect. In this way,

when the Holy Spirit takes of what is Christ's and declares it, the glory of Jesus is revealed.

Jesus said, *"All things that the Father has are Mine."* The Father planned the salvation of sinners, the Son accomplished that plan, and the Holy Spirit testifies of the salvation the Father and the Son accomplished. Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit in glorifying Christ is at the same time the work of revealing the will and the love of God the Father, who sent the Son.

The Holy Spirit makes known not only the salvation of Christ but also the things to come that He promised. Dwelling in the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He makes him believe the fact that he has become a child of God and is a person who will receive the eternal kingdom of God. He also guides him to hold on to the word of Jesus and keep his faith even in the midst of tribulation and hardship.

Therefore, the One whom the Holy Spirit reveals is Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit testifies of the salvation completed with the baptism Jesus received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection, makes us realize and believe that word, and reveals that Jesus is the Savior and the God who is to receive glory.

[Question] 10. John 16:23–24—on whose name must the disciples rely when they ask God the Father?

The disciples must ask God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, *"Whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you,"* and then went on to say, *"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your*

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joy may be full."

To ask in the name of Jesus carries a meaning beyond adding a set phrase at the end of a prayer. It is a confession of faith that one believes that Jesus is one's God and Savior, and comes to God relying on the righteousness He accomplished. Jesus bore the sin of all people, including the disciples, with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and received all the judgment. And He rose again from the dead and became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

Originally, a sinner cannot come before the holy God on his own. But Jesus Christ removed sin and tore down the wall of sin that had stood between God and man. A person who believes in His salvation receives the remission of sins, becomes a child of God, and obtains the right to come before the Father. Therefore, the name of Jesus represents all the righteousness and merit of Christ, who saved sinners—that is, the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection.

Jesus is the Mediator between God and those who believe. The disciples must ask God not by putting forward their own deeds or righteousness, but with the faith that believes in Jesus Christ, who bore all their sins. Even when their own shortcomings are exposed as they live, they must not look only at those shortcomings and hesitate to come to God, but must ask the Father for help, believing in the righteousness of Jesus, who bore even those sins.

A prayer offered in the name of Jesus contains the faith that acknowledges Him as the Son of God and as one's Lord and Savior. God the Father hears the prayers of His children who believe in the Son and come in His name, and He gives them the help they need. When the disciples receive answers to prayer, the Father is glorified through the Son, and the hearts of the

disciples become full of joy.

Therefore, the disciples must ask God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. This is the prayer of coming before the Father believing that Jesus saved them with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection, and relying on Him as their Mediator and their God.

[Question] 11. John 16:26—what does the expression *'in My name'* that Jesus spoke of refer to?

The expression *"in My name"* means believing in and relying on who Jesus Christ is and what He accomplished. The name of Jesus is not a mere title; it represents His identity, authority, and merit as the Son of God and the Savior of sinners.

Jesus came to this earth in the flesh in order to save sinners. He bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing that sin, He received the judgment on the Cross, and He rose again from the dead and became the perfect Savior. Therefore, for a person to ask in the name of Jesus means to believe in the baptism that Jesus, who saved him from sin, received from John, and in His Cross and His resurrection, and to come to God relying on the righteousness He accomplished.

A sinner cannot come before the holy God by putting forward his own righteousness and good deeds. But Jesus Christ removed sin and tore down the wall of sin that had stood between God and man. Because the person who believes in Him has received the remission of sins and become a child of God, he can ask God the Father in the name of Jesus for what he needs. Jesus has become the Mediator between God and those who believe.

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Therefore, to say "I pray in the name of Jesus" at the end of a prayer is to confess that Jesus is one's God and Savior. It is also a confession of faith that one does not rely on one's own qualifications, but relies on the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who bore all sins and opened the way to come before God.

When God hears and answers prayer offered in the name of Jesus, the heart of the believer becomes full of joy, and God the Father is glorified through the Son. Therefore, *"in My name"* does not mean adding the name of Jesus as a formality; it means that a person asks God by believing in Jesus Christ, who saved him, and relying on His righteousness and authority.

[Question] 12. John 16:33—where does the basis lie on which the disciples can enjoy peace even in the midst of tribulation?

The peace Jesus gives the disciples is not a peace that comes from tribulation disappearing or the circumstances of the world improving. Jesus said, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* The disciples have tribulation in the world, but they can enjoy peace in Jesus Christ, who has already overcome the world.

When Jesus was arrested, the disciples were going to be scattered, each of them, and leave Jesus alone. But Jesus said that He was not alone, because the Father was with Him. In the same way, a saved saint is not a person who is alone. Because the Lord is in him and with him, he can enjoy peace in his heart even when his outward circumstances are hard. The basis of peace is not one's own strength or unshakable feelings, but the faith that one is united with the Lord.

This peace is also based on the salvation and the victory that Jesus accomplished. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment, and He rose again from the dead. Thereby He overcame the power of sin, judgment, and the devil, and gave the remission of sins and eternal life to those who believe. If one looks at one's own weakness, one can fall into fear and condemnation, but if one believes in the salvation Jesus completed, one can stand boldly before God.

Therefore, the basis on which the disciples enjoy peace is the fact that Jesus Christ, who has overcome the world, is with them, and that He has saved them from all sin and judgment. A saint is not a person who never meets tribulation, but a person who, even in the midst of tribulation, believes that the Lord is with him and stands up again relying on His victory. Because a person who is in Jesus believes in the Lord, who is greater than the tribulation of the world, he can enjoy peace of heart and live boldly.

[Question] 13. John 16:33—what victory, concretely, does it mean for the saints to overcome in the world?

Jesus said, *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* Therefore, the victory of the saints does not mean never going through tribulation at all, or always doing well in the world. The saints, too, meet hardship and persecution, and can fall because of the weakness of the flesh. But even when they go through such things, not abandoning their faith and standing up again relying on Jesus Christ, who has overcome the world—this is the victory of the saints.

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That Jesus has overcome the world means that He has overcome the power of sin, judgment, and the devil. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment, and He rose again from the dead. Because Jesus has thus completed salvation, a person who believes in Him no longer lives bound under sin and condemnation.

The saints' overcoming the world also does not mean becoming perfect people who do not commit sin by their own will or ability. The saints have times when they fall because the flesh is weak, but they believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus has already borne and washed away all their sins. With this faith, they do not give in to guilt and the condemnation of Satan, but come to stand boldly before God again. This is precisely what 1 John means when it says, *"This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith."*

Also, the saints who have overcome the world do not live as slaves to the desires and values of the world, held captive by them. Even if the world looks splendid and beautiful and tempts the human heart, the saints are people who have obtained the remission of sins, eternal life, and the kingdom of God, which are more precious than that. Therefore, they do not follow sin in order to obtain the things of the world, but abide in the word of the Lord and do what pleases God.

The victory of the saints does not lie in never falling, but in standing up again, even after falling, by believing in Jesus Christ, who saved them with the water and the blood. Because the Lord is in the saints and with them, the saints are not alone. Believing in the perfect salvation of the Lord rather than in one's own shortcomings, keeping one's faith even in the midst of tribulation, and preaching the gospel to souls who have fallen into sin—this is the life of the saints who overcome the world.

[Question] 14. John 16:33—what is the nature of the tribulation that those who follow Jesus Christ go through in the world?

Jesus clearly said that the disciples would have tribulation in the world. The tribulation spoken of here does not mean only the ordinary hardships that everyone goes through in life. It refers to the hatred, rejection, and persecution one receives for believing in Jesus Christ, following His word, and testifying of the gospel.

Those who follow Christ live in the world, but they are no longer people who belong to the world. Because Jesus chose them out of the world and made them the people of God, those who do not know God and follow the evil spirit of the world come to hate them. The world hates the saints because it hated Jesus first, and to hate Jesus is to hate God the Father, who sent Him.

This tribulation can begin with criticism and mockery, the severing of relationships, and social rejection, and lead on to being put out of the synagogue and forcible oppression, and at times it can even reach persecution that takes one's life. What is even more serious is the fact that the persecutors can regard their actions as justified, and even think of them as serving God. But the fundamental reason they act that way is that they do not know God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Jesus spoke of tribulation in advance not to frighten the disciples, but so that they would not stumble when that time actually came. When the disciples are persecuted, they must not be bewildered as if they had met with something strange, but must remember what Jesus already said. They must prepare their faith, knowing the fact that because the Lord received hatred and persecution first, those who follow Him can also walk the same path.

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The strength with which the saints overcome tribulation does not come from human resolve or a strong will. It comes from believing the fact that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead and completed salvation. With the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel, the Holy Spirit is present, and He helps him remember the word of the Lord and keep his faith in the midst of tribulation.

Therefore, tribulation is not a sign that a saint has been abandoned by the Lord. Even if a saint receives the hatred of the world, he is not alone, and Jesus Christ, who has overcome the world, is in him. Those who follow Christ must not be ashamed of the gospel or abandon their faith even in the midst of tribulation, but must live keeping the word and the gospel to the end, relying on the victory of the Lord. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

What the Holy Spirit does when He comes to us

< John 16:1-13 >

"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

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The advantage of His sending the Helper

Let us look at the word. *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7)*. It means that when the Lord leaves this world, dies on the Cross, rises again, ascends, and goes to where the Father is, it is to the advantage of the disciples of Jesus and of you and me. Why is it to our advantage? It is because He sends us the Helper. The Bible calls the Holy Spirit the Helper and also calls Him by other names. The Helper means the One who helps. What He said is that once the Lord has gone up, God the Father sends the Holy Spirit to us, sending the Helper in order to have Him help us.

He told us what work the Holy Spirit does when He comes to us. *"And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:8–11)*. What does the Holy Spirit do when He comes? It says, *"He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8)*. It means that Jesus came to this earth and did the work of saving us, and after Jesus went up, the Holy Spirit came to this earth and convicts the world of the sin of people, of the righteousness of God, and of judgment.

"Of sin, because they do not believe in Me"

As for sin, there is no need for us to interpret it, for the Lord spoke of it directly: *"Of sin, because they do not believe in Me"*

(John 16:9). Not believing is sin. What sin is that? It is the sin that leads to hell. We call it sin when we fail to live according to the Ten Commandments in our lives and do wrong, but that is called transgression. It is the transgression we commit out of our weakness and frailty. But what sin does God treat as the greatest? It is not believing in Jesus. It is not believing that Jesus is the Son of God, the Creator who created the universe, and the Savior who came to save mankind from sin. The Jews did not believe. Jesus said that He had been with the Father and had come, that what He did, He did not do as He pleased but as the Father told Him, and He said, *"I and My Father are one" (John 10:30)*, but they did not believe.

Who does not believe? Not only the Jews but also the people of the world do not believe that Jesus is the Savior, and do not believe the salvation by which the Son of God came in human flesh, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again to save us. To believe what the Lord did, we must believe that the Lord is God. We must believe that He is the Savior. We must believe in that God, the God who came to save us. That God is Jesus. He is the Christ. We must believe that the King of kings became a man in order to save His people from their sins, had the sin of mankind transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, gave His body over to the Cross to be judged for sin, and became the sacrificial offering of atonement, and so saved us completely. That is why the sin spoken of, "Of sin," is not believing in the Lord.

Theology today can be divided into three kinds. First, there are those who study conservative theology, which believes according to the word. Second, there is what is called new theology, or critical theology. Instead of believing the word as it is, it doubts the word, investigates it scientifically, and weighs whether it is something believable or not before believing. For

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example, Jesus walked on the sea and came to His disciples, but the critical theologians say that the disciples were far away from the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and that when they saw Jesus walking along the embankment of the sea on the horizon, it looked as if He were walking toward them on the sea, and so the Bible recorded it that way. People who twist the Bible like this, who do not believe the word but bend and reinterpret it and then believe, are called critical theologians, or new theologians, because they made a new theology. Third, there is the theology of those who struggle, who say that instead of talking only, we should live a life of directly saving the people who are oppressed and suffering in the world. The churches of that line of theology do not know at all, and have no interest in, the fact that Jesus saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Not believing according to the word like this is sin.

The sin of not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the sin that leads to hell. Not believing that Jesus is God and the Creator is also the sin that leads to hell. Not believing that Jesus is the Savior who was actually born in the New Testament as prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled the word of promise of the Old Testament, and not believing what He did—that, too, is the sin that leads to hell before God. The sin that sends a person to hell is not believing, and not accepting in the heart, the work by which Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from the dead to save us from all sins. That person goes to hell.

This is the first sin, but who testifies of it? The Holy Spirit does. Then how does the Holy Spirit speak to you? It means that the Holy Spirit convicts through what the person who has received the remission of sins and has the Holy Spirit in his heart speaks to you. “You are going to hell. That must not be. You must believe”—this is what those who have the Holy Spirit speak.

Jesus, who is the righteousness of God

It says, *"Of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more" (John 16:10)*. We become righteous by believing in the righteousness of God. In our language, the word for *"righteousness"* (ui) is written with the Chinese character 義, which means "right," and this character is formed by adding the character 我, meaning "I," to the character 羊, meaning "sheep." The sheep of sacrifice made me sinless—that is righteousness.

Jesus came to this earth in human flesh, had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and by receiving the judgment for our sins on the Cross fully with His body, with the blood He shed, and with His death, He became the sacrificial offering of atonement for us. God the Father made His own Son the sacrificial offering of atonement, and through the punishment for sin that He brought down on His own Son, He stopped the punishment for our sins. It means that because His own Son bore the sins of you and me with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment, He did the work of saving you and me from sin through the punishment He brought down on His own Son. If you and I believe in that Jesus as our Savior, He does not judge us, and because He judged our sins through His Son, He gives us salvation. God chose that method. That is called the love of God.

The sacrifice of atonement, the sacrificial offering of atonement, atoning for sin—these mean that I bear it and I receive the judgment for it. The One who brings down judgment is God, and when God the Father looked, His own Son had had the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment, shed His blood, and come to death; so through His own Son's becoming the sacrificial offering of atonement, the wrath of God the Father

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subsided and His heart was appeased. According to the law, God the Father would have had to kill off all of sinful mankind, but because He had loved mankind from the time He made them, in order to open the way of salvation, He judged His own Son through the sacrificial offering of atonement according to His righteous law, and through that Son He saved us. So the salvation accomplished on the Cross is what fulfills both the righteousness of God and the love of God.

As for "of righteousness," what is righteousness? *"I go to My Father and you see Me no more" (John 16:10)*. Why do they see Him no more? The Lord is saying this: I came to this earth and was born on this earth for a life of thirty-three years; at the age of thirty, with the baptism I received from John, I had your sins transferred to Me; and at the age of thirty-three, I was nailed to the Cross, suffered humiliation, received a brutal punishment, and came to death, and did I not thereby receive all the judgment for your sins? Did I not thereby save you? This is precisely the righteousness of God. I have completely accomplished the work of saving you. The baptism I received, the blood I shed on the Cross, and the death and punishment I received are the salvation that saved you; not in words only, but I bore your sins and received all the punishment for your sins with My body and removed every curse—and yet you do not believe. This is what the Lord is saying.

A person who believes becomes a right person by believing in that right work by which God saved us. We obtain salvation by believing that Jesus came to this earth for me, had my sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John for me, suffered the Cross and died for me, and rose again and saved me; and His merit becomes ours by faith. A person who does not believe is convicted. "God has made you righteous, so why do you not believe? My Son came to this earth, had sin transferred

to Him with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, and came to death, and so removed all your curses perfectly, so why do you not believe?"—thus the Holy Spirit convicts.

We call the blood of the Cross of Jesus the precious blood. It means very costly blood, the costly blood of life. Why do we say that? It says, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27),* and yet instead of our dying, the Lord came to this earth in human flesh, had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, and though it was we who had to shed blood and die, He gave up His life on the Cross. That is why it is costly and precious. The Lord shed the blood you had to shed, so are you not grateful? You had to receive the punishment and shed blood, but the Lord received the judgment and shed His blood—would that blood not be precious? That is why it is called the precious blood, the blood that is precious.

Jesus came two thousand years ago and saved us with the water and the blood, and that is still effective now. We obtain salvation by believing that; it is not that Jesus is removing sins now in the present progressive. To believe that He has already removed them—"Ah, so He did that. He has already saved me"—that is faith.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the key to the word

It says, *"Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:11)*. The viewpoints are different. The Triune God says that our not believing in Jesus as our Savior is sin, whereas we call it sin when we do wrong and fail to live

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according to the law, which is the word of God. The viewpoint of God and our viewpoint are different, and the thoughts are different. Of course, that is also sin. But it is not the sin that leads to hell. It is because all those sins can be remitted, and we can become people without sin through believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

But what does it mean that the ruler of this world has been judged? The Bible is not something one can understand just by looking at it with both eyes open. A person who is not born again does not know the Bible. However much he opens up commentaries and talks, it is all nonsense. The Bible must be interpreted by the Bible. When a person who has the Holy Spirit in his heart speaks, he can speak accurately. It is because the Holy Spirit had people write it, and because the Holy Spirit knows all the deep will of God the Father. Let us look at the word of 1 John. *"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:4–8).* Then what are the works of the devil?

Even looking only at this word we have read, ordinary people do not know what this word is. Because they do not know, preachers try, if at all possible, not to preach on 1 John. But when a person who has the Holy Spirit preaches, the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be in it without fail. Only then is this Scripture unlocked. The serpent enticed Adam and Eve and made them commit sin, and when sin came, it made them build

a wall between themselves and God. But since it says that the Son of God was manifested on this earth in order to destroy the works of the devil, it means that He came to this earth to remove the sin that the devil had put into people.

It says, *"Of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged" (John 16:11)* and *"the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8)*, so let us look at the word of 1 Corinthians to see what His destroying the works of the devil is. *"So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?' The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:54–57)*. It means that, as this word says, our Lord has won the victory.

The ruler of this world is Satan the devil. Satan the devil entices people and makes them commit sin, and gives death to those who have become sinners. It says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)* and *"the strength of sin is the law" (1 Corinthians 15:56)*, so if we do not believe the word of God and commit sin, sin comes upon us, and when sin comes, death comes. That is why, because of death, we had to do as Satan the devil told us. But it means that the Lord came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and by being hung on the Cross and dying, He gave us the victory.

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The righteousness of Jesus Christ has overcome Satan the devil

Where did death come from? It came because of sin. The strength of sin is the law, so sin is established because the law of God exists. Jesus Christ came to this earth and had the sins we committed by not believing the word of God transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, and bearing our sins, He went to the Cross and received the judgment for sin. He shed His blood and came to death, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and completed the work of saving us. Therefore, by believing in Jesus Christ, who gives us the victory, we have become those who overcome sin and death. Because we have become those who overcome through Jesus Christ, we have become those who give thanks to God the Father.

So that the ruler of this world has been judged means that while the devil had played the ruler over all the people of this world with sin and death, Jesus Christ came to this earth and settled our sin and death, and so, through our believing in the righteousness of that Jesus Christ, we have overcome Satan the devil. Jesus judged the devil. What the devil could bring us was nothing but sin and death, but as for those two things, Jesus came, bore sin and received the judgment, and so He raised us from death and set us free from sin. That is how He saved us. That a person is judged and goes into the unquenchable fire is because he does not believe what Jesus did. It means that if one does not believe, one is judged and becomes a slave of the devil, and goes where the devil goes. It means that when the Holy Spirit comes, He does such work for us.

Would the Holy Spirit be in a person who has not received the remission of sins and has sin in his heart? No. Our Lord was not only hung on the Cross; because He was born and did the

work of having our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again, and so saved us. *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. We must know the truth.

People today say many truly ridiculous things. They say that in their hearts there is the devil and there is also God. They also say that in their hearts there is sin and there is also the Holy Spirit. Religious people and sinners can talk as they please, but it is completely different from the Bible. Such a person is a person who is not born again, and a religious swindler. If you fall into the hands of a swindler, you ruin yourself and your family for a lifetime. You have to serve them, earn money and offer it to them, do volunteer work, and even give your life. And do you receive the remission of sins for that? You do not. Do you go to the kingdom of heaven? You do not. They are religious people. God dislikes religious people. Jesus said that the Pharisees, who were like whitewashed tombs, the religious people, go to hell. We must become people of faith who believe what the Lord did.

What the Spirit of truth does

It says, *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13)*. The Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and convicts people of the sin of not believing, convicts them of the sin of not believing that God has made us righteous, and also lets us know that He has judged the ruler of this world. When we had fallen into sin, the devil lorded it over us with sin and death, and threatened us with death so that we

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could not move. But the Lord took upon Himself all the weapons the devil had—the curse, death, and judgment—and saved us. Therefore, the devil has been judged.

When Jesus, hanging on the Cross and dying, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* the devil was crushed at that moment. He was startled. "What is it that has been finished?" It means that Jesus came to this earth and removed all the sins of this world, and by being hung on the Cross and dying, He removed all death. That is why for you and me there is no death. Because there is no death, when the Lord comes we will be raptured alive, and even if we die as God has appointed, even if the devil comes and kills us, we come back to life, and so there is no death. By believing in the Lord, who is the resurrection, we have become those who have obtained eternal life and the resurrection.

"He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). When you hear the word of God now, if the Holy Spirit is in your heart, He says, "Ah, that is right, that is right." The Holy Spirit who is in you says that the word I preach is right, and if I preach wrongly, He says it is wrong. It means that in that way He holds us, guides us, and leads us. Suppose some false person who is not born again is put up at the pulpit. If, while preaching the word, he says, "On the Cross, all our sins were removed with the precious blood of Jesus," the Holy Spirit says, "No, that is not it; no, that is not it." It is not because you and I are smart, but the Holy Spirit says, "That is not it; that is not the word of God," and when we hear the right word, He truly says amen and truly gives thanks. Even if we have not opened our mouths and said amen out loud, He makes us say in our hearts, "That is right, right, yes, right."

"He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13). It means that the Holy Spirit does not speak according to His own will. When we preach the words Jesus spoke when

He came to this earth, the work by which Jesus saved us with the water and the blood, this gospel, the Holy Spirit tells us whether it is right or wrong, and helps us exactly as the Lord said. It means that He guides us in the manner of, "It will happen exactly as the Lord said; have faith; do not think strange thoughts."

The work of a false spirit that speaks on its own authority

Those today who claim to have received the Holy Spirit speak on their own authority. There is something called prophetic prayer. After holding a revival meeting, when they tell those who want to receive prophetic prayer to come to a room, dozens of people go into that room, stick their heads forward, and receive prayer. After laying hands on their heads and saying things that make no sense, they give prophetic prayer, saying, "God will use you as a great servant of God. While I was praying, I saw a vision in which there were countless sheep, and you were there driving and raising the flock. He wants to raise you up and use you as a servant of God."

What does the Bible say? It says that when one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins, one becomes a witness of this gospel, and that as one lives the life of a witness, according to the gift the Lord has given—if He has given the gift of serving, one serves; if one is a teacher, one teaches; if one is a pastor, one pastors; if one is one who works miracles, one works miracles—one comes to be entrusted with one part of the work in the Church of God. But they pray with the laying on of hands and give false prophecies, making people feel good so that they bring and give enormous offerings. The Spirit of truth helps, leads, and guides you and me

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to believe just as the Lord said when He came to this earth, and just as He said in the Old Testament.

So in this age, holding Holy Spirit meetings while saying that one has sin in one's heart is entirely the work of the devil done by the slaves of the devil. What work of God can a person do whose heart has not received the remission of sins? He cannot do the work of God. It is said that long ago a certain emperor saw a vision in which a cross appeared, and that he had it painted, carried it in front of him, went into battle, and won. God does not do things that way. He works without fail through a person of God who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and God gives a gift to a certain person. The word "gift" means that He gives a present. He gives the gift of looking at the word and realizing it, and the faith to be able to pastor, so that when one looks at the sheep, one comes to know it all: "This brother or sister should be guided in this way." In that way He makes them serve the Lord and nurtures them so that faith grows in their hearts. The Holy Spirit does such work.

The Apostle Paul said, *"Though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers" (1 Corinthians 4:15)*. In the church, everyone is an instructor. The people next to you have things they do better than you in some field. There is much to learn from one another. But it means that though there are ten thousand instructors, there are not many fathers. One might say, "We have all received the remission of sins, and you and I are equally righteous, so can only you be a guide?" But there are not many people who have the heart of a father. Just as parents in the flesh prepare everything for their children, lead them, and protect them, the gift by which the Holy Spirit raises up that person, works in him, gives him the gift, and gives him the ability to do the work is not

something everyone receives. Therefore, you must know that it is a happy thing to be guided within the church and to follow, and to have a guide who guides you. That is the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, who tells of things to come

The Holy Spirit does not speak on His own authority, but speaks only what He hears. When we hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit during the worship service, the Holy Spirit tells us of things to come, saying in your hearts, "It is all correct; He will do it this way; it is right." It is the Lord who lets us know how we will enter the kingdom of the Lord in the future, what we must go through before entering, and what work we must do and how we must live until we go before the Lord before reaching that kingdom. That is precisely the spreading of the gospel.

There are people who will be martyred and people who will not, and those who are with us now have a high probability of not being martyred. But among the people who are hearing the gospel now and the people who will be born in the future and hear the gospel, there are very many who will go into the tribulation. It seems that God will save a very great number of people all over the world. It means that at the time of the last harvest there will be that many people saved all at once—more than in all the years the gospel has been preached until now. They will be martyred by believing and confessing the fact that the Lord received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from the dead in order to save them, and that He saved them. Because they will be killed if they say they believe, in the end countless people will obtain salvation in that way.

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That is why we think that they, too, will believe, and patiently make booklets, telling them concretely and fully why they were deceived, and by whom, how, when, and with what they were deceived. When that day comes around, those people will be grateful to us.

If they say, “Thank you. How much hatred you must have received in order to teach us this in the midst of hardship,” we will say, “Of course. We only preached what the Lord did. We only did as we were told. We are doing this because the Lord who is in us told us to do this work. If you are going to be grateful, be grateful before the Lord. Have a grateful heart toward us too, but give thanks to the Lord.” That is what we will say.

I am so glad at heart to have preached the word the Lord spoke about the work of the Holy Spirit among the words He left like a last will. But that does not mean that the word the Lord prophesied, the word He left as His will, will not be fulfilled. It will all be fulfilled. When, and to whom, will it be fulfilled? For you and me, the word of the Lord will be fulfilled through the spreading of the gospel, through the flower-calyx work. But once we are gone, for those who come after us, that word will be fulfilled through martyrdom, just as He prophesied. I give thanks before the Lord. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Ask in My name, and you will receive

< John 16:14-24 >

"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you. A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father. Then some of His disciples said among themselves, 'What is this that He says to us, "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me"; and, "because I go to the Father"?' They said therefore, 'What is this that He says, "A little while"? We do not know what He is saying.' Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, "A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me"? Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you. And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.

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Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full."

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus

The word of John chapter 16 is a word like a last will that the Lord left with His disciples as He faced the Cross. The Lord said, *"He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14–15)*. Here, *"He"* refers to the Holy Spirit.

That the Lord was nailed to the Cross, went through shame and humiliation, and died was because He bore our sins. That the Lord suffered like that was because He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John. Knowing that He would be hung on the Cross and die, the Lord said that the Holy Spirit would come and glorify Him. Earlier, the Lord had said, *"When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13)*. It means that after the Lord has gone up to heaven, God pours out the Holy Spirit as a gift.

All believers have the Holy Spirit. But since He said, *"He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14)*, the Holy Spirit is not One who works as He pleases, but One who shines into our hearts and explains to us the work that the Lord spoke of and did when He came to this earth. It means that, explaining it to us in that way, He makes us overcome the last days. In the last days, when the Antichrist appears, martyrdom will begin in earnest, but everything will end within three and a half years of the seven-year Great Tribulation. Even that is too long a time.

God, who made His own Son the sacrificial offering of atonement

The Lord suffered brutal agony on the Cross and was killed. By saying on the Cross, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and dying, He completed our salvation. People, too, when they have done much wrong to someone, often say things like, "I will take responsibility for this and sacrifice myself to atone for my wrong," or "I will take responsibility for this matter and bring it to an end." When mankind committed sin, God the Father loved people and sent His own Son. *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17)*. It means that He did not send the Son to judge all the people of mankind, but sent Him to save us through the Son. How did He save us? God passed our sins on to His own Son by giving Him baptism through John, and Jesus had our sins transferred to Him with that baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, suffered a wretched death, and rose again.

Therefore, Jesus atoned for and bore our sins, and He Himself paid the price of our sins. With His own body He became our atoning sacrifice and gave Himself as the sacrificial offering. In the Old Testament, for a sinner to receive the remission of his sins, he laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering according to the law of sacrifice that God had established, confessed his sins, and then cut the throat of the sacrificial offering, took its blood, and gave it to the priest. Then the priest cut the body of the sacrificial offering into pieces, placed it on the altar of burnt offering, burned it, and offered the sacrifice before God, and by that the sinner received the remission of sins. Just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament became the offering of the people of Israel and was

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wretchedly killed, Jesus came to this earth, had the sins of you and me transferred to Him and bore them with the baptism He received from John, and by suffering a wretched death on the Cross, He atoned for the sins of you and me. He removed our sins. He received that much punishment and removed our sins.

God the Father had to judge the sin of all people, but He did not judge us; He had the sin passed on to His own Son and judged His own Son on the Cross. Looking at that sight of His own Son shedding His blood and dying wretchedly, He says to you and me who believe, "You have no sin; you are My people," and gives us salvation.

That people who oppose God will rise up in the future is because God permits tribulation and suffering for a short time for the last harvest, in order to sort out the wheat and the tares. At that time, the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus. The Holy Spirit gives us the faith that believes the word of Jesus Christ, and so makes us give glory to God and gives us strength. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one God to us; God the Father plans, Jesus Christ accomplishes what He planned, and after Jesus has gone up, the Holy Spirit testifies of what these two did and makes our faith firm so that we do not fall before the enemy. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. In that way, the Lord makes us bear these last days well.

The beautiful death of the sacrificial offering of atonement, at which the world would rejoice

Next it says, *"A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father. Then some of His disciples said among themselves, 'What is this that He says to us, "A little while, and you will not*

see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me"; and, "because I go to the Father"?'" (John 16:16–17). The disciples of Jesus still did not believe, even though the Lord had kept telling them since before then. Even though Jesus had told them everything about how He would be hung on the Cross, they did not believe. They were thinking, "Surely not." It was because only people with many sins were hung on the cross.

In ancient Rome there was the death penalty, but people whose crimes were light were not killed by being nailed to a cross. Only those who had committed crimes that were truly the worst of the worst, crimes that made people shudder, were killed by having nails driven through both arms and feet and being made to bleed. According to what medical scholars say, the agony of dying on a cross while continually pouring out the blood of the body is the most painful death by which a person can be killed on this earth. So to say "Crucify Jesus" was to say that Jesus was the most heinous criminal. Because Jesus kept saying that He was the Son of God, to the Jews He looked like the worst of the worst. That is why they had Him killed that way, and Pilate, too, permitted it.

And then the Lord said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy" (John 16:20)*. It means that when I am nailed to the Cross and die, you will wail and lament because you love Me. In the eyes of the disciples, Jesus was not One who should be hung on the Cross, and yet He was hung on the Cross and died; because the One they loved died like that, it was so sad and grievous. But He said that the world would rejoice. Because Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, He was hung on the Cross, suffered wretched agony, went through shame and humiliation, and died. But that death is the

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death of the sacrificial offering of atonement, a death in which He bore our sins and died in our place, and so it is a beautiful death.

That is why the Lord willingly offered Himself. Because it was what the Father had appointed, He was deeply distressed as He faced the intense suffering ahead and prayed that, if possible, the cup might pass from Him. Yet He obeyed the Father's will to the end and gave Himself up willingly. He said that the disciples would lament because they still had a relationship with Him in the flesh, but that the world would rejoice. Whom does the world refer to? It refers to you and me today. *"You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy" (John 16:20)*. Because Jesus was hung on the Cross, shed His blood wretchedly, and came to death, the sins and judgment of you and me have come to an end. Now there is nothing left for God the Father to judge you and me for.

Some people say that even after one has received the remission of sins, if one commits sin, there is something for God to judge, and that one will receive retribution. But if God brought down judgment one by one on everything you and I have done wrong, there would be no one left living unharmed in this world. It is not that God does not discipline us at all for what we have done wrong. But He does not do it to the point of death, to the point of complete ruin. That He takes up the rod a little and then lets it pass when we turn back is because He is concerned that we might keep going down that road. Because Jesus was hung on the Cross and died, it has become a great joy to us.

So the Lord spoke with an illustration. It is said that when a woman gives birth to a child, it is so painful that she vows never to have a child again. But once she has given birth, they say, the child crying and fussing is so lovable that she completely forgets the pain of that painful birth. It means that it is the same with

Jesus. The agony He suffers is so great, but when He sees that through His being killed the people who obtain salvation by believing in Him are increasing, He is the Lord who forgets all the agony He suffered.

"Ask, and you will receive"

The Lord said, *"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23–24)*. Until then, people had prayed before God just as if saying, "I beg you, I beg you." That is not proper prayer. *"That day"* refers to the time after Jesus dies on the Cross, rises again, and goes up. From then on, the Holy Spirit comes to us, and it means that whenever we pray to God the Father through that Holy Spirit, if we pray in the name of Jesus, He will hear us.

Prayer that puts the final word on it by saying at the end, "I pray in the name of Jesus," had never existed in the history of mankind up to that time, ever since mankind came into being. The Jews do not pray that way even now. They just pray to the LORD God to help them and to bless them, and end with amen. But you and I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, pray, whether we pray to the Father or to the Holy Spirit or to Jesus, because They are the same God; but at the end we put the final word on all these prayers by saying that we pray in the name of Jesus.

"Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). Why do we receive when we pray in the name of Jesus? It is because Jesus is our Savior. It means that if Jesus is our Savior, we are the children of God and the people of God, and

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so our Father, our God, hears our prayers and answers them. That is why, when we pray in the name of Jesus, we receive answers to our prayers and our joy becomes full.

This is extremely important. To pray in the name of Jesus after asking for help is an extremely important prayer, because it is praying with the faith that believes that I have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus, that Jesus is my Savior, and that He has received in my place all the judgment for my sins. Such prayer indeed has the true power of faith. If one has neither the faith nor the assurance that one has been saved, one says that even when one prays, one is not sure whether God hears or not. But in praying in the name of Jesus, there is the faith that believes that Jesus is my Savior and my God, and the Savior who bore my sins, received all the judgment for those sins, and saved me from hell, judgment, and destruction. That is why God the Father hears the content of that prayer, and if it is something to be answered, He answers it. Then our joy becomes full.

Pray by faith and deal with things by faith

When things are very urgent, I pray. Long ago, too, when hard times came, I prayed. When it seemed that no matter how hard I tried it would not work, I made the determination by faith, "This is not something to be done by effort, but something to be dealt with by faith," and praying, from the very next day I really dealt with it by faith. In some matters, people give all kinds of reasons, saying, "This cannot be done, because it has never been done in our country," but when I did it by faith, it was resolved simply. By then they were matters for which there was no way at all to be resolved except by faith. Such matters are not resolved by shouting at the other party and giving orders, nor by

pleading with them to be lenient. It is done by praying to God the Father and doing it by faith. This is the power of prayer. You and I have received the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit is in us. That is why, whenever things are urgent, we pray and obtain joy.

Besides this, there are many things I could talk about if I were to tell them. When things do not go well and one must take on a new challenge, everyone asks how to do it, but it can be done by faith. It was something I had never done before, but I prayed, "God, this is needed. God the Father, my Lord Jesus Christ, You are my God, so please bless this," and took on the challenge. God gave it all. It was not because I did well. We have no ability at all, but I believe that God heard our prayers and answered them. Even now I give thanks before God by faith. God has helped us and will help us in the future, too. When we meet hard times in the future, too, He will help us. Even now we meet many hard things, and we have to do this and have to do that, but God has helped with all of those and resolved them all.

It is the same with our work of preaching the gospel to the whole world. This is a testimony that came from a certain region of Africa: our workers were going into a certain island with booklets to preach the gospel, and a person from another denomination boarded the boat and went in with them. Our workers handed out the books and preached the gospel, and he followed them around. In fact, meeting foreigners and preaching the gospel is not an easy thing. Saying that Jesus saved us on the Cross does not work, because all the people of the world already know that. Even if they believe that, sin does not disappear. But that person watched our workers working, and as they parted on the boat coming back, he said, "Doing it with booklets as you do seems far more beneficial than what we do," and asked for a few books for himself, so they gave them to him. Honestly, there is

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no comparison between talking while giving a book and asking without a book, “Do you happen to have sin in your heart?” I believe that God will make the gospel go into many countries in the future.

The world is in hardship now, but in fact, a time of hardship is a good time to preach the gospel. When people have no hope for the future, they must believe in God. They must be saved by faith and live by faith. If one believes in the Lord, one can live. That we are living like this now is not because there is something in us. It is because we prayed by faith before God—because we prayed with the faith that, by believing in Jesus, Jesus has become our Savior and God has become our Father—that God heard our prayers and answered them. I hope that we know this fact, pray in the name of Jesus, and live a life full of joy. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

We are one with the Lord

< John 16:32-17:26 >

"Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: 'Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but

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these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.'"

"The Father is with Me"

I give thanks that God knows our circumstances well and has supplied what we need very fittingly, at the right time. We have to start the mission school, raise up workers, and send books in the days ahead, and God has prepared what we need in due time. I think the Lord may well come while we live like this, preaching the gospel.

Jesus Christ said, *"I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16:32)* and then went on to say, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace" (John 16:33)*. When the Lord was on this earth, the Lord was not alone. With whom was He? The Father was with our Lord. I tell you that just as the Lord was with God the Father, we, too, are with our Lord.

Just as the Father was with Jesus Christ, in this present age our Lord is with us saints, with all the servants of God, with each one of you. It means that we are not alone in this world, but that just as the Lord was with God the Father long ago, our Lord is with you and me. For that reason, because we are with the Lord, we enjoy peace and overcome the world. Just as our Lord was one with God the Father, we, too, are one with the Lord. You and I are also living as one body with the Lord, as one.

We are those who are with the Lord

In chapter 17, too, the Lord kept speaking repeatedly. He spoke repeatedly of the relationship between the Father and Himself, the work of the Father, His being sent by the Father and doing the work of the Father, and those who believe in Jesus Christ obtaining eternal life and becoming one with God. Just as Jesus Christ is God the Father's, we, too, are God's. You and I,

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too, sometimes seem to be alone, and there are times when we think as if we were alone.

But in reality, the Lord is with us and dwells in us, and He makes us overcome the world and gives us peace of heart. Just as the Father sent Jesus Christ, our Lord sends us and has us spread this gospel and serve it. For that reason, you and I must know that we are with our Lord and are one with the Lord. We must have such faith. You and I are not those who are alone, but those who are with the Lord. Because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, and so accomplished the gospel of the water and the Spirit and removed our sins, everyone who has received the remission of sins is with the Lord.

The Lord, who has overcome the world, is in us

When our Lord was on this earth, there were many people who tried to kill Him, and there were truly many who despised Him. It is the same with us. When the people of the world despise us and torment us, at times anger rises up. Rather than an unbearable anger rising up, it is more that they seem too laughable. A feeling arises: “Who on earth do you think we are, that you make such a fuss? The Lord is with us and the Lord is in us, so it will do you no good to act cocky just because you have some money or have bought a house.” But provoking their feelings never does any good.

They are those who have not yet received the remission of sins and are under the rule of the devil and placed under the curse, whereas we are the children of God and the people of God, the people of God in whom Christ is and in whom the Holy Spirit is.

If we were to use all the authority God the Father has given us, the desire arises to bring down judgment on them at once. The authority the Father has given us is a tremendous authority. But for the sake of preaching the gospel, we do not do so. It is because Jesus Christ is with us and is in us.

Just as the Father was in Jesus Christ, our Lord is in us, too, and makes us do the work of the Lord. Thinking of that, we come to believe, and we come to think of the fact that we are one with the Lord. We think of the fact that you and I are one with the Lord, that the Lord is in us and we are in the Lord, and we become thankful. We are not lonely. We have tribulation in the world, but because the Lord, who has overcome the world, is in us, we, too, overcome the world. Just as the Lord said, *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33),* because our Lord is in us just as the Father was in the Lord, we enjoy this peace.

Those who live with the Lord

Whatever we may meet, the Lord is with us in us, guides us, and governs us. As we live like this and preach the gospel, someday the Lord will come. Evangelistic meetings will continue in the days ahead, and I know that when we hold meetings, the brothers and sisters will gain new strength in their hearts, like mugwort sprouting up in spring, and will take heart all the more and preach the word. In any case, you must know the word that the Father did not leave the Lord alone but was with Him, and you must never forget that just as the Father is in the Lord, the Lord is in us. So we must become those who enjoy peace of heart in the faith that believes in the Lord, and who work in that peace.

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Give thanks before our God, and do not forget the fact that the Lord is always with you and with me. Do not think that you are lonely, or in distress, or going through tribulation alone; and I hope that you will always know that we live with the Lord, hold that faith, and, though we are lacking, live by faith in the way that pleases the Lord. ✉

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CHAPTER

17

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John Chapter 17 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In John 17:1–13, what does it mean that Jesus prayed, "*The hour has come*"?

John 17:1–13 is the prayer that Jesus, facing the Cross, offered to God the Father. Jesus prayed that He might glorify the Father through the work of salvation He would accomplish, and He pleaded that the Father would give eternal life to the disciples who believed in Him and keep them in the world.

1. "*The hour has come*"—the time has come to complete the work of salvation

Jesus prayed, *"Father, the hour has come."* This does not simply mean that the time had come for Jesus to die. It means that the time had come for the work of saving mankind that God had planned to be completed through the Cross and the resurrection.

Jesus had already had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body once and for all with the baptism He received from John. Now He had to bear those sins, be nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and receive, in place of mankind, the judgment of sin that mankind had to receive. And He had to rise again from the dead and become the eternal Savior of those who believe.

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Therefore, when Jesus prayed, *"Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,"* it was not a prayer asking to be spared from suffering. It was a prayer asking that He might fully accomplish, through the Cross and the resurrection, the will of salvation that the Father had entrusted to Him.

That Jesus saves sinners is the glory of the Son, and that the love and the righteousness of God are revealed through that salvation is the glory of the Father.

2. Jesus is God, who rules over all people and gives eternal life

Jesus said that the Father had given Him authority over all flesh. This authority is not mere political power or worldly dominion. It is the authority to save sinners from sin and death and give them eternal life, and to judge those who do not believe.

Jesus is not one of the creatures or one of the prophets. He is the Son of God whom God the Father sent, and the Savior who gives eternal life to sinners.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin on the Cross with His own blood and life, and rose again from the dead. Therefore, whoever believes with the heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished receives the remission of sins and eternal life.

3. Eternal life is to know God and Jesus Christ

John 17:3 clearly tells us what eternal life is.

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only

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true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

Here, to 'know' does not only mean having a great deal of knowledge about God and Jesus. It is to know why God the Father sent Jesus to this earth and what Jesus did to save us from sin, and to believe it with the heart.

To know Jesus Christ is to believe the following truths.

— Jesus is the Son of God whom God the Father sent.

— Jesus came in the flesh to save sinners.

— Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John.

— Jesus bore those sins and was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross.

— Jesus rose again from the dead and became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

When one believes this truth of salvation with the heart, the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished becomes one's own. All the sins in one's heart are washed away, one receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, becomes a child of God, and obtains eternal life. This is the eternal life obtained by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

4. Jesus finished the work that the Father had given Him

Jesus said in verse 4:

"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do" (John 17:4).

When Jesus offered this prayer, His death on the Cross and His resurrection had not yet visibly taken place. But Jesus had already borne the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, and He had resolved to go to the Cross in obedience

to the will of the Father. Because that salvation was certain to be completed, He spoke of it as a work already accomplished.

The work that God the Father had entrusted to the Son was to save mankind from all sins. Jesus did not work according to His own will or by human methods. According to the will the Father had determined, He fulfilled the righteousness of God with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Therefore, salvation is not a work that a person must complete. It is to accept by faith the work that Jesus has already completed. A sinner must not try to wash away his sins with his own deeds, tears, and resolutions, but must believe with the heart in the salvation that Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

5. Jesus has been with God the Father from before the foundation of the world

Jesus prayed that the Father would glorify Him with the glory He had had together with the Father before the world was. This word clearly shows the divinity of Jesus.

Jesus is not someone who first began to exist in Bethlehem. He has been with God the Father from before the foundation of the world, and He is God, who created all things. He came to this earth in a human body to save sinners.

Having finished the work of salvation, Jesus rose again from the dead, ascended, and returned into the glory of the Father. Therefore, to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not to believe in the sacrifice of one great human being, but to believe the fact that God the Creator Himself came to sinners and saved them.

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6. The disciples believed that Jesus had come from God

Jesus preached to the disciples the word that the Father had given Him. The disciples received that word and believed that Jesus had come from the Father and that God had sent Him.

Faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also begins with receiving the word of God. It is not choosing only the parts that suit one's own thoughts, but receiving with the heart the whole word of salvation that God accomplished through Jesus Christ.

If one believes in the incarnation of Jesus but leaves out the baptism He received from John, or believes in the blood of the Cross but does not know what sins He bore as He went to the Cross, one cannot fully understand the meaning of salvation. The baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection are one connected work of salvation.

Just as the disciples received the word the Father had given and believed in Jesus, sinners today must also hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit through the written word and believe it with the heart.

7. A person who has received the remission of sins belongs to God the Father

Speaking of the disciples, Jesus said, *"They are Yours."* The disciples were not people who had been holy or perfect on their own from the beginning. They too were weak, and when Jesus was arrested, they were afraid and scattered.

But they received the word of Jesus and believed that He was the Savior whom God had sent. A person who belongs to Jesus

also belongs to the Father. By saying, *"All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine,"* Jesus showed that the Father and the Son are one.

A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit no longer belongs to sin and the devil. He belongs to God, and he is a child of God. His status is not decided by changes in his feelings or deeds, but is confirmed by faith in the salvation Jesus accomplished and in that word.

8. Jesus prayed that the faith of the disciples would be kept

Jesus prayed for the disciples, who had to remain in the world even after He returned to the Father.

"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are" (John 17:11).

Because the disciples had to preach the gospel of Jesus, they were people who would receive the hatred and persecution of the world. Jesus did not pray that they be taken out of the world right away, but prayed that they be kept in the name of the Father.

A person who has received the remission of sins also meets trials and tribulations while living in the world. If at such times he relies only on his own will and ability, he can easily be discouraged. But the Lord keeps those who believe in the gospel with the word and the Holy Spirit, and makes them keep their faith by being united with one another in the Church of God.

Here, to become one does not mean gathering together unconditionally according to human will. It is to believe in the

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same salvation that Jesus accomplished, to receive the same Holy Spirit, and to be of one heart for the will of God and the preaching of the gospel.

9. Judas, the son of perdition, did not believe the word and betrayed Jesus

Jesus said that He had kept the disciples, but that *"the son of perdition"* had perished. This refers to Judas Iscariot. Judas was among the company of the disciples and heard the word of Jesus, but he did not receive Jesus into his heart as his Savior. In the end, he followed his own greed and sold Jesus.

What Judas Iscariot did fulfilled the word already prophesied in the Scriptures. This shows that a person's outward status or the office he holds in the church does not save his soul. Salvation is obtained when one believes with the heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

One is not saved merely by the fact of having been close to Jesus; one must believe with the heart who Jesus is and what salvation He accomplished for us.

10. Jesus gives His joy to the saints in full

Jesus wanted His joy to be fulfilled in the disciples. That joy is not a passing pleasure that arises only when one's circumstances in the world improve.

It is the joy that all one's sins have been washed away by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the joy that God has become one's Father, and the joy that one has obtained eternal life and will enter the kingdom of heaven. It is also the

joy that comes from the fact that the Lord keeps such a person and uses him in the work of the gospel.

When the saints look only at their own weaknesses, they become discouraged; but when they look to the word that says Jesus has completed salvation, they regain their joy. This joy begins with hearing and believing the gospel, and it becomes even fuller as they hear the word and serve the gospel in the Church of God.

Conclusion

John 17:1–13 is the word in which Jesus prayed that He would complete the work of salvation He had received from God the Father and give eternal life to those who believe in Him, and that their faith would be kept.

Jesus is God, who has been with the Father from before the foundation of the world. He came to this earth in the flesh to save sinners, had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body once and for all with the baptism He received from John, and bore those sins and was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross. And He rose again from the dead and became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

A person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and eternal life and becomes a child who belongs to God. The Lord keeps him with the word and the Holy Spirit, and makes him become one with the other saints in the Church of God and serve the gospel. A saved saint is not a person who keeps his faith by his own strength, but a person who believes that the Lord is keeping him and lives in the joy that He gives.

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In John 17:14–26, is it not fitting that a person born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live as one who does not belong to the world but preaches the gospel?

John 17:14–26 is the word in which Jesus prayed for the disciples who believed in Him, and for all who would hear and believe the gospel the disciples would preach. Jesus did not pray that the saints be taken out of the world, but prayed that they be kept from falling into evil in the world, be sanctified by the truth, and carry out the mission of preaching the gospel.

1. A person who has received the word of God does not belong to the world

Jesus said in verse 14:

"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world" (John 17:14).

The disciples received the word of God that Jesus delivered to them. In particular, they believed the fact that Jesus was the Son of God who had come from God the Father, and the Savior who had come to save mankind from sin. As a result, though they lived in the world, they became people who did not belong to the world.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also lives on this earth just like the people of the world, but where his soul belongs is changed. When one believes that Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in our place, and rose again from the dead, a person who

belonged to sin and the devil becomes a child of God.

Not belonging to the world does not mean living apart from people in isolation. It means that the master of one's life is no longer the desires and values of the world, but Jesus Christ. The saints are people who, while living in this world, live according to the word of God and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people.

2. The reason the world hates the saints is the gospel they have received

The world hated Jesus, and it also hated the disciples who had received the word of Jesus. In John 15:18–19 as well, Jesus spoke of the fact that the world had hated Him before it hated the disciples, and said that the world hated the disciples because they did not belong to the world.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not say that a person can become righteous by his own deeds and religious efforts. It declares that all people are sinners, and that because Jesus completely removed all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, one must believe that fact and receive the remission of sins.

This word can be a hard word to accept for a person who is holding on to his own righteousness and religious merits. But the saints who believe in the gospel cannot change the truth because of people's reactions. Even if they receive the hatred of the world, they must clearly preach the salvation that God has accomplished.

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3. Jesus prayed that the saints be kept from evil rather than taken out of the world

Jesus said in verse 15:

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

If the saints who have received the remission of sins left the world right away, there would be no one to preach the gospel to other souls. The Lord leaves the saved saints in the world and makes them preach the word of life to those who have not yet been saved.

While the saints remain in the world, they meet the desires of the flesh, false teachings, the persecution of the world, and the temptations of the devil. That is why Jesus prayed that the disciples be kept from falling into evil.

The saints are not people who keep their faith by their own strength alone. God keeps the saints with the written word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and makes them keep their faith by being supplied with spiritual food in the Church of God. The saints must acknowledge their own weakness and keep engraving the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit on their hearts.

4. *"Sanctify them by Your truth"*

Jesus said in verse 17:

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

To be sanctified means, first of all, to have one's sins cleanly washed away and become a person who belongs to God. A sinner cannot make himself holy by his own efforts. Because

Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body once and for all with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of those sins on the Cross with His blood and life, those who believe are sanctified.

Also, a person who has been sanctified by the truth keeps hearing the word of God, lays down his own thoughts, and lives according to the will of God. After receiving the remission of sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one is set apart by a life of serving and preaching that truth.

Therefore, the holiness of the saints does not come from putting on an outwardly pious appearance. It is revealed in believing with the heart the truth of the remission of sins that God has accomplished, and in living under the rule of that word.

5. Jesus gave Himself in order to sanctify us

Jesus said in verse 19, *"For their sakes I sanctify Myself."* Jesus gave Himself wholly in order to accomplish the work of salvation that the Father had entrusted to Him.

Jesus, who had no sin, had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and He was judged on the Cross in the place of sinners. Because Jesus offered Himself as the sacrificial offering, those who believe have been washed from sin and have become the holy people who belong to God.

Our holiness does not begin with our own good deeds. It begins with the salvation that Jesus completed by giving His own body. The saints first receive holiness through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and then live a life of giving themselves for the preaching of the gospel and the will of God.

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6. A saved person is a witness of the gospel sent into the world

Jesus said in verse 18:

"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

The purpose for which God the Father sent Jesus into the world was to save sinners. Jesus completed that salvation, and now He has sent the disciples into the world to preach the gospel He accomplished.

In Matthew 28:19–20 and Mark 16:15 as well, Jesus, who had risen again from death, commanded the disciples to preach the gospel to all nations and to every creature. Luke 24:47–48 says that repentance for the remission of sins should be preached to all nations, and that the disciples are witnesses of these things.

A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not content with his own salvation alone. He believes the fact that, just as God sent Jesus, Jesus has also sent him into the world. So he preaches to his family, his neighbors, and the people of the whole world the gospel that Jesus removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

7. The prayer of Jesus also includes those who believe in the gospel today

Jesus said in verse 20:

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word" (John 17:20).

In this word, *"these"* refers to the disciples who were with Jesus at that time, and "those who will believe in Me through

their word" refers to all who would hear the word preached by the disciples and come to believe in Jesus.

After witnessing the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples received the Holy Spirit and preached the gospel. The gospel they testified of was handed down to those who came after them, and it has reached even us today. Therefore, this prayer of Jesus also includes those who today have heard and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins.

We have not seen Jesus directly with our physical eyes, but we believe in Him through the word of the Scriptures that the apostles preached. We are saved by believing the word that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from the dead.

8. The saints become one in the same gospel and the same Spirit

Jesus prayed that those who believe would become one.

"That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21).

The oneness of the saints begins with believing the same truth of salvation. Those who believe the same gospel that all sins have disappeared through the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and who have received the same Holy Spirit, become the family of God.

The saints may differ from one another in personality, upbringing, occupation, and ability. But because they have the same faith that all their sins were transferred to Jesus and that Jesus received the judgment of those sins in their place, they can

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serve the gospel with one heart.

This oneness is important evidence for the preaching of the gospel. Through the sight of those who have received the remission of sins loving one another and serving the gospel in unity, the world comes to see the fact that God the Father sent Jesus as the Savior.

9. The glory Jesus has given is the glory of having become saved children of God

Jesus said that He had given the disciples the glory He had received from the Father. The glory given to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not obtaining a high position and praise in the world.

It is glory that a sinner receives the remission of sins and becomes righteous, becomes a child of God, has the Holy Spirit dwelling in his heart, and comes to serve the work of God. To live forever with Jesus in the kingdom of God in the future is also the glory given to the saints.

The saints may receive hatred and persecution in the world, but before God they are precious children. A person who believes in this glory does not chase only after the recognition of the world, but lives a life of exalting Jesus Christ, who saved him, and preaching the gospel.

10. Jesus gives the saints His love and His presence

In verse 23, Jesus prayed that the world would know the fact that, just as the Father had loved Him, the Father had also loved those who believe. And in verse 26 He said:

"And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

The love of God was revealed most clearly through the work of salvation of Jesus Christ. God loved sinners and sent His only begotten Son, and Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John and gave up His life on the Cross.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit comes to know how great and perfect the love of God is. He is no longer a forsaken sinner, but a child who has received the love of God. Also, because the Holy Spirit comes upon the heart of a person who has received the remission of sins, Jesus is with him.

11. The saints have the hope of seeing the glory of the Lord and living together with Him

Jesus prayed that those whom the Father had given Him would in the future be with Him where He is and see His glory.

For the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is not only the life of this world. Even after the life of the flesh ends, they have the hope of living forever with the Lord and seeing His glory. Because they have this hope, the saints can serve the gospel without being discouraged even in the tribulations of the world.

Jesus does not stop at saving sinners, but makes the saved live together with Him forever. This is the eternal blessing given to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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Conclusion

In John 17:14–26, Jesus made clear that those who believe in Him are the people of God who do not belong to the world. The Lord did not pray that they be taken out of the world, but prayed that they be kept from evil, be sanctified by the truth, and be sent into the world to preach the gospel.

Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body once and for all with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and was judged by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from the dead and completed salvation. A person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God.

The saved saints must become one in the same gospel and the same Spirit. They must love and serve one another, and preach the word of life to those who have not yet been saved. The Lord keeps such saints in the midst of the world and is with them, and finally makes them share in His glory. ✉

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 17

[Question] 1. What are the characteristics of the prayer of Jesus Christ recorded in John chapter 17?

The whole of John chapter 17 is the prayer that Jesus Christ offered to God the Father. One characteristic of this prayer is that Jesus offered it after finishing His last words to the disciples, right before He was arrested and hung on the Cross. Knowing everything that was about to happen to Him, Jesus lifted His eyes to heaven and prayed, addressing God as "Father."

First, this prayer is a prayer that seeks the will and the glory of God the Father. Jesus prayed, *"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You."* The glory Jesus sought was not the glory of exalting Himself alone by avoiding the suffering of the Cross. It is the glory of glorifying the Father by accomplishing to the end the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him.

Jesus had already borne all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Now He had to bear those sins and be judged on the Cross, and rise again from the dead and complete salvation. Therefore, this prayer contains the meaning of asking to carry out to the end the work the Father had entrusted to Him, and asking that through that work the love and the righteousness of God the Father be fully revealed. Jesus did not pray that His own will be done, but prayed that He might complete the will the Father had entrusted to Him.

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Second, it is not a prayer for Himself alone, but a prayer of intercession for the disciples. Jesus asked that even after He left the world, the disciples would be protected in the name of the Father, would not fall into evil, and would enjoy the joy of the Lord in full. He did not ask that the disciples be taken out of the world, but prayed that they be kept from evil while they remained in the world and preached the gospel.

He also prayed, *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."* It is a prayer that the disciples would be set apart not by human thoughts or worldly methods but by the word of God, and that, just as the Father had sent Jesus into the world, they too would be sent into the world to preach the gospel. The keeping and the sanctification of the disciples were for the mission of the gospel entrusted to them.

Third, it is a prayer not only for the disciples of that time, but for all who would come to believe in Jesus in the future through their word. Jesus said, *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word."* Therefore, this prayer includes the saints of all ages who would hear and believe the gospel of the apostles.

Fourth, it is a prayer that seeks for the saints to become one with God and one with each other. This does not simply mean that people make outward organizations into a single one. It means that, just as God the Father is in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is in the Father, the saints also abide in the Lord and become one in the same truth and faith. Through such oneness, the world comes to believe the fact that Jesus Christ is the One sent by the Father.

Lastly, this prayer is a prayer that looks toward the eternal life and the eternal glory of the saints. Jesus asked that the saved also be with Him where He is, and that they see the glory the Father had given Him. The prayer Christ offered was a prayer

before the Cross, but it does not end in suffering and death. It is a prayer that looks all the way to the remission of sins and eternal life, the keeping and sanctification of the saints, the preaching of the gospel and oneness, and even the eternal glory to be enjoyed in the kingdom of God.

Therefore, the prayer of Christ shown in John chapter 17 is a prayer for completing the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him, and a prayer of intercession for the disciples and for all the saints who would believe in the future. At its center lie the glory of God the Father, the salvation to be accomplished with the water and the Spirit, the eternal life and the keeping of those who believe, and holiness and oneness in the truth.

[Question] 2. In John 17:1, what does *"the hour has come,"* which Jesus Christ said as He prayed, mean is imminent?

John 17:1 says, *"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You."* Here, the *"hour"* does not simply mean that the time to pray had come; it refers to the time when Jesus Christ would complete the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him.

Jesus came to this earth and bore the sin of all mankind once and for all with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. After that, He called the disciples, taught them about God and salvation, and revealed that He was the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. Now the time had come for Him to bear all those sins and be hung on the Cross and judged, and to rise again on the third day after His death and complete salvation.

Jesus had earlier said, *"The hour has come that the Son of*

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Man should be glorified," and He had likened Himself to a grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies and bears much fruit. Therefore, for the Son to be glorified does not mean avoiding suffering or obtaining worldly glory. It means completely accomplishing the work of saving sinners by being judged on the Cross for the sin of mankind that He had borne with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and by rising again from the dead.

Jesus also wanted to glorify the Father through this work. He prayed that He might accomplish to the end the salvation God the Father had planned and reveal the righteousness and the love of God, and that after rising again He might return to the Father and once again enjoy the glory He had enjoyed together with the Father from before the foundation of the world.

Therefore, the word *"the hour has come"* means that the decisive time had come for Jesus to bear the sin of the world, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and be judged on the Cross, to rise again from the dead and complete the salvation of mankind, and to return to the Father. Jesus did not try to avoid that work; He prayed that He might fully carry out the last mission the Father had entrusted to Him and glorify the Father.

[Question] 3. In John 17:1, by what title did Jesus call God as He began His prayer?

Jesus called God *"Father."*

"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You" (John 17:1).

This title shows that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus

came into the world sent by the Father, preached the word the Father had given Him, and did the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him. In the prayer of John chapter 17 as well, He kept calling God *"Father,"* and said that He had come from the Father, was accomplishing the will of the Father, and would return to the Father again.

That Jesus called God Father is not a mere honorific. It is an address that reveals the relationship between God the Father and the Son, and it shows the fact that Jesus did the work of salvation not according to His own will but according to the will of the Father. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead and completed the salvation the Father had entrusted to Him.

Also, the Father of Jesus Christ becomes the Father of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in Christ. A person who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished becomes a child of God and can call God his own Father. Therefore, in the word in which Jesus called God *"Father,"* there appears not only the relationship between the Father and the Son, but also the love that saves sinners through the Son and makes them the children of God.

[Question] 4. What does *"glorify"* in John 17:1 mean?

To *"glorify"* in John 17:1 means that Jesus Christ completes the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him and reveals the glory of God, and returns to the glory He had enjoyed together with the Father from before the foundation of the world.

Jesus prayed, *"Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may*

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glorify You." The Father glorifying the Son and the Son glorifying the Father are connected with each other. The Son obeys the will of the Father and completes salvation, and the Father raises from the dead the Son who has completed that work, lifts Him up to heaven, and glorifies Him.

The way for Jesus to be glorified was not the way of obtaining the power or honor of the world. Jesus bore the sin of all mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and He had to bear those sins and be hung on the Cross and judged. And by rising again on the third day after His death, He had to overcome sin and death and become the Savior of mankind. To carry out this work of salvation to the end and complete it was for the Son to be glorified.

Jesus went on to say, *"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."* Because the righteousness and the love of God were revealed by the Son saving sinners with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection, the Father also received glory through the Son.

Jesus also prayed, *"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."* Jesus is God, who was with the Father even before He came to this earth. Therefore, the prayer to be glorified also contains the meaning of asking that, after completing the work of salvation, He might rise again and ascend, and return to the glory of God He had enjoyed together with the Father from before the foundation of the world.

Therefore, to *"glorify"* in this passage does not mean that Jesus avoids suffering and is exalted in the world. It means that He is judged on the Cross for the sin of mankind that He bore with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, rises again from the dead and completes the salvation the Father entrusted

to Him, thereby revealing the glory of God, and once again enjoys His original glory together with the Father.

[Question] 5. What kind of life does *"eternal life"* in John 17:2 refer to?

John 17:2 says, *"As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him."* This word shows that eternal life is not a life that a person makes for himself or obtains by his deeds, but the life that Jesus Christ gives to those whom God the Father has entrusted to the Son.

Eternal life does not simply mean that the flesh of this world lives endlessly long. It is the life of living forever with God, having escaped from sin and death, and the life of enjoying the glory of the kingdom of heaven as a child of God. Therefore, eternal life includes both becoming a person who belongs to God by receiving the remission of sins now, and the hope of living again and living forever with the Lord in the future even if the body dies.

The One who gives this eternal life is Jesus Christ. Jesus bore the sin of all mankind once and for all with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, and rose again from the dead. Because Jesus solved the problem of sin and death in this way, a person who believes in the salvation He accomplished receives the remission of sins and obtains eternal life.

The following verse 3 explains eternal life, saying, *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."* Here, to know does not mean merely knowing a name or historical facts. It is to believe in the

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only true God, and to know and believe rightly that Jesus Christ, whom God has sent, is the Creator, the Savior who saved sinners, and the Lord who gives eternal life. It is also to accept with the heart the fact that Jesus washed away all one's sins with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection.

Therefore, eternal life is the life that a person who has believed in Jesus Christ, received the remission of sins, and become a child of God has already obtained. He is not a person for whom everything ends with death, but a person who will rise again when the Lord comes again and live forever with God. The saints who have obtained such eternal life must not only enjoy that life with thanksgiving, but must also live preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that others may obtain the same life.

[Question] 6. In John 17:2, the authority that God the Father gave Jesus Christ is authority to give what, and to whom?

God the Father gave Jesus Christ authority over all flesh and authority to give eternal life.

"As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" (John 17:2).

First, Jesus Christ has authority over all flesh. Here, all flesh does not refer only to some nations or particular people, but means all mankind. God the Father entrusted the Son with authority over all people, and Jesus became the Savior and the Lord of the whole world. That the risen Jesus said He had received all authority in heaven and on earth also has this same meaning.

Second, Jesus Christ has authority to give eternal life to people. The most important purpose for which Jesus rules over all flesh lies in saving from sin those whom the Father has given Him and making them obtain eternal life. Jesus bore the sin of all mankind in His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead. The One who gives the remission of sins and new life to those who believe in this work of salvation is none other than Jesus Christ.

Third, Jesus Christ has authority to raise the dead. Just as God the Father raises the dead and gives them life, the Son also gives life to whom He will. A soul dead in sin comes alive by hearing and believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, and on the last day the body also lives again. Therefore, the eternal life Christ gives includes both passing from death into life by receiving the remission of sins now, and rising again in the future to live forever with God.

Fourth, Jesus Christ has authority to judge. As the word says, God the Father *"has committed all judgment to the Son."* Jesus is the Savior who saves sinners, and at the same time He is the Judge who judges faith and unbelief. A person who believes in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished obtains eternal life and does not come into judgment, but a person who has rejected Him and His word remains in sin and comes to be judged.

This authority was revealed as Jesus Christ completed the work of salvation according to the will of the Father. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and paid the price of that sin on the Cross, and by rising again He overcame sin and death. God the Father entrusted the Son, who accomplished this work, with the authority to save, give life to, judge, and rule over people. This is so that all people may honor the Son, Jesus Christ, just as they honor God the Father.

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Therefore, the authority God gave Christ is not mere worldly dominion. It is the authority of the Savior and the Judge, who rules over all mankind, remits the sins of those who believe and gives them eternal life, raises the dead, and in the end judges all people.

[Question] 7. In John 17:3, how did Jesus define eternal life?

Jesus defined eternal life as follows.

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).

Eternal life does not simply mean that the flesh lives endlessly. To know who the only true God is, and to know and believe in Jesus Christ whom God has sent, is eternal life. It is to believe that God alone is the true God, and that He is the One who sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to this earth to save sinners.

To know Jesus Christ does not mean having knowledge about His name or His life. It is to know and believe with the heart that Jesus is the Son of God sent by God the Father, and the Savior who loved sinners and saved them. Through Jesus we also come to know how much God loves sinners.

Jesus came to this earth in the flesh and bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And He bore those sins and was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of sin, and He rose again from the dead. Therefore, to know Jesus Christ is not only to know who He is, but to know and believe the fact that He washed away all one's sins and accomplished perfect salvation with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection.

A person who believes in this gospel receives the remission of sins, becomes a child of God, and obtains eternal life. Not only will he live forever in the future, but from now on he enjoys the life of being with God. Therefore, the eternal life Jesus spoke of is the life one receives and enjoys by knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom God has sent, as the Savior, and by believing in the salvation He accomplished.

[Question] 8. In John 17:15, what mission did Jesus Christ want the disciples to carry out in the world?

Jesus did not want the disciples to leave the world and hide. So He prayed to God the Father as follows.

"I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15).

Because the disciples are people who belong to Jesus, they do not belong to the world. But not belonging to the world does not mean living without any relationship with the people of the world. Jesus wanted the disciples to remain in the midst of the world without falling into evil, to be clothed with holiness by the word of God, and to carry out the work entrusted to them.

That mission is to testify of Jesus Christ and preach the gospel of salvation. As Jesus said, *"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (John 17:18)*, the Father sent Jesus to have Him accomplish the salvation of mankind, and Jesus sent the disciples into the world to have them preach that salvation.

The gospel the disciples had to preach is the news that Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and was judged and died on the Cross,

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and rose again from the dead, thereby saving sinners perfectly. The disciples are not people who display themselves, but people who testify of Jesus Christ, who saved them, and of the remission of sins He accomplished.

Tribulation and hatred accompany this mission. Because the disciples did not belong to the world, just as Jesus did not belong to the world, the world hates them. Jesus did not pray that such hardships be removed; He prayed that the disciples be kept so that they would not fall into evil, but keep their faith and serve the gospel to the end.

Therefore, the mission of the disciples that Jesus wanted was not to cut themselves off from the world and enjoy their own peace, but to keep the truth in the midst of the world and preach the salvation of Jesus Christ. To have others hear their testimony, believe in Jesus, and obtain the remission of sins and eternal life is the mission entrusted to the disciples.

[Question] 9. In John 17:17–19, through what is the sanctification of the disciples accomplished?

Jesus prayed to God the Father as follows.

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

What sanctifies the disciples is the truth, and that truth is the word of God the Father. It is not a person's resolutions or good deeds that make a person holy; one obtains holiness when one knows and believes the word of truth that reveals how God saved sinners.

At the center of this truth is the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and was hung

on the Cross and judged, and rose again from the dead. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word of truth that washes sinners from all sins and makes them holy people who belong to God.

Jesus went on to say, *"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth" (John 17:19)*. That Jesus sanctified Himself means that He obeyed the will of God the Father and gave His own body wholly as the sacrificial offering for sinners. Because Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John and gave Himself on the Cross, a person who believes in that truth of salvation receives the remission of sins and is sanctified.

This holiness is not something a person achieves by himself by reducing his sins little by little. As the word says, *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10)*, it is the holiness received by faith in the work that Jesus Christ accomplished once and for all. By one offering, the Lord has perfected forever those who are sanctified.

Therefore, the disciples are sanctified by believing the word of the truth of God, that is, the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus Christ accomplished with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection. The disciples who have been sanctified in this way keep the truth as people who belong to God, and live preaching in the midst of the world the gospel that saved them.

[Question] 10. In John 17:21, what is the evidence by which the world comes to believe that Jesus Christ is the One sent by God?

Jesus prayed that, by all who believe in Him becoming one,

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the world would come to believe the fact that God the Father had sent Him.

"That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21).

The evidence that Christ was sent by God is shown in those who believe in Him being united with God and becoming one with each other. Just as God the Father and Jesus Christ are one, those who have received the remission of sins also form one body in Jesus. Because the Lord is in them and the Holy Spirit leads them, people who are different from one another come to serve the gospel together with the same faith and the same hope.

The foundation of this oneness is the same salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished. All the saints believe the one gospel that Jesus bore their sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead and saved them. When those who have believed this truth and received the remission of sins serve the same God as Father, belong to the same Lord, and love and serve one another, the fact that Christ is in them is revealed.

Jesus also said, *"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35)*. The sight of the saints cherishing one another, covering one another's shortcomings, and seeking the benefit of the gospel and of other souls rather than their own becomes the mark that they are the disciples of Jesus. That love comes from the salvation and the love that Jesus first gave.

Therefore, through the saints who become one with each other, love one another, and serve the gospel, the world comes to see the fact that Jesus Christ is the Savior sent from God. The oneness of the saints does not arise from human organizational ability or human friendships, but is accomplished by the

salvation of Jesus Christ, whom God sent, and by the love He has given. In this way, the life of the church that has become one in the gospel becomes the practical evidence that reveals to the world that Christ was sent.

[Question] 11. What state does the *'perfection'* of the saints spoken of in John 17:21–23 refer to?

In John chapter 17, the perfection of the saints is to become one in God the Father and Jesus Christ. Jesus prayed, *"I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one."* Just as the Father and the Son are one, the saints also become one with God and form one body with each other by Christ being in them.

This oneness begins with the perfect salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead. A person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins, becomes righteous, and becomes a child of God. Also, because the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart, he is not separated from the Lord but lives in one life with Him.

The saints who have received the same salvation are one body and people called in one Spirit. They have one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. Therefore, the oneness of the saints does not come from forcibly making one another's thoughts and personalities the same, but is accomplished by believing the same gospel of salvation, being led by the one Spirit, and serving the one Lord.

The perfection of the saints extends to revealing this oneness in their lives. The saints must bear with one another with humility, gentleness, and longsuffering, and strive to keep the

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oneness the Holy Spirit has accomplished, in love and in peace. Just as the Lord was sent by the Father and accomplished the work of salvation, the saints also, as people sent by the Lord, must join their hearts together to preach and serve the gospel.

When the saints become one in Christ in this way, the world comes to see the fact that God the Father sent Jesus Christ and the fact that God loves the saints. Therefore, the perfection of the saints means a life of becoming one with God by believing in the remission of sins that Jesus Christ accomplished, forming one body with the other saints in the Holy Spirit, loving one another, and serving the gospel together.

[Question] 12. In John 17:21–22, what union does the oneness of the saints that Jesus Christ pleaded for mean?

Jesus first spoke of the fact that God the Father and He are one as the basis for the saints becoming one. He prayed, *"That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us."* Therefore, the oneness of the saints is not simply getting along well with one another, but forming one body in God by the saints being in Christ and Christ being in the saints.

This oneness begins with believing the same gospel of salvation. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and was hung on the Cross and judged, and rose again from the dead. A person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins, becomes righteous, becomes a child of God, and receives the Holy Spirit in his heart. It is those who have been saved by the one Lord and have received the one Spirit in this way who

become one in Christ.

So the saints have one body and one Spirit, one hope and one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God. The oneness of the saints is not each person believing in Jesus according to his own thoughts while only gathering together outwardly. True oneness is accomplished when they know and believe in the same way who Jesus is and how He saved sinners with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Jesus said, *"The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one."* The glory the Lord has given the saints is the glory of receiving the remission of sins, becoming children of God, and living together with the Lord. Because the saints have all received this same grace and eternal life, they must bear with one another's shortcomings and love one another, and join their hearts together in peace and serve the gospel.

In this way, the oneness of the saints has a clear purpose. When the saints become one in the truth, love one another, and preach the gospel together, the world comes to see the fact that God the Father sent Jesus Christ. Therefore, the oneness of the saints does not stop at gathering in one place; it is to be united with the Lord by believing the same gospel of salvation, to love one another, and with one heart to preach and serve the gospel the Lord has entrusted to them.

[Question] 13. How does John 17:24–26 teach that the union of the saints and the love of God are connected?

In John 17:24–26, union and love appear in a relationship that cannot be separated from each other. The source of union

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lies in the Father having loved the Son from before the foundation of the world. Jesus prayed that those whom the Father had given Him would in the future be with the Lord and see His glory. This means that the saved saints will live together with the Lord forever.

This union is not accomplished only in the future. Jesus prayed, *"That the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."* The love of the Father is in the saints, and Jesus is also in the saints. Therefore, a saint is not a person who lives apart from the Lord after being saved, but a person who lives as one with the Lord.

Such union is accomplished when one accepts the love of God by faith. God loved sinners and sent His only begotten Son, and Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and then received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and rose again. A person who believes in this salvation receives the remission of sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. The Lord is in that person, and that person also comes to live in the love of the Lord.

In a person united with the Lord, the love of God is actually revealed. Because he was first loved, he looks after his brothers and sisters, joins hearts with them, and serves the gospel so that other souls may also be saved. Love brings about union, and union in turn is revealed in acts of love. Serving one another and joining hearts for the work of the gospel is the fruit of love borne in a person who has become one with the Lord.

Therefore, union does not simply mean being gathered together. It is a relationship of life accomplished by the love with which the Father loved the Son dwelling in the saints, and by Jesus also being in the saints. In this love, the saints become one with the Lord, and also join hearts with the other saints and reveal the love of God. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

We have come to know the love of God through Jesus

< John 17:1-10 >

"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them."

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The prayer Jesus offered before the Cross

If up to John chapter 16 Jesus spoke words like a last will to the disciples and to those who would be saved in the future, this word is the prayer of Jesus. It is the content of the prayer Jesus offered before God the Father before He was hung on the Cross and died and went up to heaven. Our Lord had said earlier, *"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)*. And now He prayed that He might carry out all the work the Father had entrusted to Him and stand before God, and that He might be given the strength and the faith He needed.

The Lord prayed, *"As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" (John 17:2)*. Since the Father gave the Son authority over all flesh, it means that Jesus rules over all people and saves all people with that authority that is His. He then goes on to say the same thing again, saying, *"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3)*. He is praying that He may be able to carry out the work God the Father sent Him to this earth to do and entrusted to Him, and that by being glorified He may give glory to God the Father.

And what the Lord goes on to say is this. Saying, *"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word" (John 17:6)*, He continues with this word. *"For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me" (John 17:8)*. Jesus came to this earth and said countless times, "I do not speak according to My own will, on My own; I am speaking

to you the word the Father told Me to speak. I came from the Father. The Father and I are one." In this prayer too, He says that the words He spoke to the disciples and to people when He came to this earth were not His own words, but the word the Father told Him to preach.

That Jesus came to this earth and had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, that He was nailed to the Cross for us, that He died, that He rose again—all of this He did not according to His own will, but according to the will of the Father. Because the Father told Him to do so, Jesus heard that word and spoke it to us and also carried it out. Jesus said this again and again. And while He prays for Himself, He also prays that, just as God the Father had kept Jesus, the Lord's people who heard the word of Jesus would also be kept.

The love of God the Father that we came to know through Jesus

There is something I want to tell you. As I think about God, I often ask myself, "Do I know the love of God? If so, how do I know the love of God?" I have asked this question and answered it. God the Father revealed His love through Jesus. He revealed that He is the God of love. Through Jesus, I know that, because God the Father loved me, Jesus had my sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and received the judgment as well, and rose again from the dead and became my Savior. That God is the God of love, and how much God the Father loved me—this I know and feel through Jesus.

So, because God is such a God, I know that I am a child of God, and that the Father of Jesus Christ is my Father. It is

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because He said, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12)*. Because I know and believe all that Jesus Christ came to this earth and did, and His love—that is, that He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John and became the sacrificial offering of atonement for our sins—I know that God sent His Son for me and in order to make me a child of God, and that I am a child of God, a worker of God, and one of the people of God.

Through such things, I obtain peace within the heart that believes in God the Father and Jesus Christ. As I live my everyday life, there is peace in my heart because I am not a person of the world but have become a child of God. And there is in me the thought, "Since God the Father is my Father, will He not hear my prayer? Since Jesus Christ is my God and my Savior, will He not hear my prayer?" Jesus, as the One who existed before the universe was made, as God the same as the Father, emptied Himself for a while and became our Savior. He is my God, my Master, and the Savior who saved me. Such a heart and such faith are in my heart.

So even at times when I am weary and irritated by outward things, the thought, "God the Father, my Lord and my Savior—I am one who was saved by Him and loved by Him, and so I am now one who has become a child of God and a worker of God," takes hold of my heart and makes me dwell in peace. When I am very weary, I live abiding in such meditation and in such a heart.

Jesus kept saying to the disciples again and again, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9)*, that whoever has met Him has met God the Father. You and I are those who have received the love of God. We can know what God the Father is like by looking at what Jesus Christ did. He was truly the One who loved us. Because He loved us, He came to this earth in

human flesh; because He loved us, He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John; and because He loved us, He gave His body over to the Cross and became our sacrificial offering of atonement by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. We feel that this was the love of the Lord, and that it was what He did for us because He loved us. We feel the love of God the Father, and the love of Jesus Christ as well. Through Jesus Christ we come to know who God the Father is, and through the fact that God the Father sent Jesus Christ, we also come to know that Jesus loved us.

Because this word is the prayer of Jesus, there is no need to add this or that to it. But what is clear is that God the Father revealed Himself to us through His Son, and therefore we have come to know through Jesus that God the Father is the God of love. How do we know God? Through Jesus we know what kind of God He is. *"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3)*. For us to obtain eternal life is to know Jesus Christ. What is it to know Jesus Christ? It means that by knowing that He loved us and saved us from sin, and by knowing His love, we have obtained salvation and eternal life by faith.

The overall conclusion of our faith in Jesus is this. Whom did we come to know through Jesus? We came to know the love of God the Father. And what did we come to know through God the Father? We came to know that Jesus Christ has truly saved us. The end of faith is the salvation of the soul and the remission of sins, and the result of receiving the remission of sins is eternal life—that is, living forever as a child of God without ever dying. What the Lord is saying here is that God the Father sent Jesus to this earth and entrusted Him with the work of saving mankind, and that Jesus has now accomplished that work according to the will of the Father. Now He is praying for the disciples, for those

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who believe in Jesus. After finishing this prayer, Jesus enters into the work of being nailed to the Cross. Through that work, He has told us that Jesus truly loved us, that God truly loved us, that this love is maintained forever, and that we are saved by faith, know His love by faith, and come to live in His love.

The public ministry of Jesus, who accomplished the will of the Father

Would it have been easy or hard for Jesus to come to this earth and accomplish the will of the Father? Because Jesus came to this earth in the flesh, He would have helped Joseph, as a son ought to, since according to tradition Joseph, His earthly father, was a carpenter. Helping with the carpentry work, He kept quiet until He was thirty years old. He never revealed Himself at all. No one knew that Jesus was the Savior of mankind. He was so ordinary.

And when He turned thirty, He revealed Himself. As Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He said, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, and so the public ministry of Jesus began, in which He had the sin of the world transferred to Him with that baptism, bore that sin, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again, thereby saving us. Public ministry means that from that time on He did, not privately but publicly, the work of saving mankind from sin in obedience to the will of God the Father. So, apart from His birth, the work of salvation of Jesus runs from age thirty to age thirty-three. Over three years took place the things by which He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross and became the sacrificial offering of atonement, died, and rose again to save us.

The Bible has recorded at such length the things that happened during those three years.

Jesus was born on this earth through the body of Mary. When He was born through the body of Mary, people did not really know it. The wise men from the East, that is, the men in the East who looked at the heavens and practiced divination, learned by seeing a star that the Savior had been born into this world, and they followed in the direction the star moved. Arriving in Bethlehem, they offered gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the baby Jesus, worshiped Him, and went back. Only they knew, and the angels knew too, but the whole world was silent.

And when He turned thirty, after the baptism He received from John, Jesus went about among the people, healing the sick and raising the dead. When a woman caught in the very act of adultery stood at the crossroads of death, the lawyers, hiding stones behind their backs, asked, "This woman was caught in the very act of adultery. What would you do?" After Jesus wrote on the ground, He said, *"He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first" (John 8:7)*, and all the people withdrew. Those who had been hiding stones behind their backs dropped the stones on the ground and all quietly scattered. And Jesus said to the woman, *"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8:11)*. It means, "I, too, do not judge you as having sin."

Seeing what Jesus did, people thought, "He is a little different from us. What is this? That man is arrogant, putting on airs to make himself look like a prophet of the Old Testament," and from then on they followed Him around, watching for a chance to catch Him in some weakness. But Jesus raises the dead. The only son of a widow had died, and as the bier went out, the widow followed behind it, weeping as if out of her mind; then Jesus stopped the bier and said, *"Do not weep" (Luke 7:13)*, and

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said to the dead man, *"Young man, I say to you, arise" (Luke 7:14)*, and the dead man rose and was held in his mother's arms. Seeing such things, people thought, "Could that man be a prophet? Could he be a servant of God? God said He would send Elijah to this earth—could that man be Elijah?"

Because it was the time of passing from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the popularity of the people went over to Jesus. In Judaism, they said that anyone who broke the law should be stoned to death, but Jesus treated people with love, saying, "Neither do I condemn you," so people stirred and flocked over to Him. Also, as people followed Jesus around and listened to the word, they became hungry, and when Jesus set down a small lunch and blessed it, the food piled up like a mountain. When He told the disciples to put it in baskets and distribute it, even after distributing it all, what was left over filled twelve baskets. This event did not happen only once.

Gradually people thought, "It would be good if Jesus became our king. Then could we not sweep away the Roman soldiers too?" So the popularity of Jesus was tremendous, and He became an object of hatred to the Jewish leaders. So when Jesus said, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life" (John 6:54)*, people said, "Are we cannibals? How can he give us his flesh?" and they failed to understand every word Jesus spoke. Jesus said that when He spoke such words, He was not speaking His own words but was speaking to them what He had heard the Father who sent Him say, but the people could bear it even less. They felt a sense of crisis, thinking that unless they killed this man, the people of Israel might flock to Jesus, believe in Jesus as the Savior, and Jesus might set up a new nation. So the Jewish leaders made many attempts to kill Jesus, and because so many people were flocking to Him, the politicians of Judea thought that unless they killed that man Jesus, when it was said

that Jesus had become the king of Israel, Rome would invade again and this nation would be annihilated. And Caiaphas, the high priest of Israel, said, *"Nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish" (John 11:50)*, and the religious leaders said that Jesus must surely be killed. The politicians and the scribes of Judea also came to say that unless they killed Jesus, they themselves would be killed by the Roman soldiers.

Jesus told the disciples, and many people, in everyday life that He was the Savior of mankind. And now, lastly, there is one thing left to do. To go to the Cross, be nailed, pour out all the blood of His heart and be killed, to rise again on the third day after His death, to be resurrected and ascend, going up to heaven, and to come again—only those things remained. Those are the things Jesus had to do. So He says to the disciples again and again: "The Father glorifies Me. I came to this earth and did all the work the Father entrusted to Me, and the Father will raise Me again and set Me before you and glorify Me, and give Me all authority in heaven and on earth, and all mankind will come to know that I am the Savior of mankind." While saying this, He also told us that we would suffer tribulation at the end of the world.

Jesus, who denied Himself and obeyed the will of the Father

To follow the Lord, one must deny oneself and follow the Lord. A person who does not deny himself can never follow the Lord. The Lord said this many times in everyday life as well. To the rich young man who wanted to follow Jesus, He said, *"Go,*

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sell what you have and give to the poor … and come, follow Me" (Matthew 19:21), and He said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24)*. It means that you must deny yourself.

Just as He told us, Jesus denied Himself. Jesus, too, did not want to be hung on the Cross and die. It was because He knew how terribly painful it was. Jesus had the omnipotence of God, but He also had humanity. That is, He had both divinity and humanity. So if He wanted to walk on the sea, He walked on it, and if He wanted to raise the dead, He raised them; but because He was human, He had to eat, and to sympathize with the pain of us human beings, He had to go through it in His own body. So He had to go through all that suffering.

So although Jesus did not want to undergo that suffering, He said, *"Not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39)*, and saying that doing according to the will of the Father was the original plan and that doing according to the will of the Father was right, He denied Himself and obeyed. And He told us the same thing. To you and me as well, He said that if we want to serve Him on this earth, we must deny ourselves and follow Him even in the midst of hardship. Dear fellow believers, it is never easy for us to serve and follow the Lord.

While I have believed in the Lord, met Him through the word, and followed Him, it has been truly hard, as many who know me will know. People who have the Christian religion give testimonies. But if I were to give my testimony, I would have to write several books. Even now I have a great deal to testify about. If I had not believed in the Lord as my Savior, and if I had not tried to do the work of preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world according to the word of the Lord, I would still be in the churches of the world. Humanly, I am a person who loves, sympathizes, and lets pass what should be let

pass, but my fundamental nature is single-minded, so that even if the whole world comes at me, if the word of God says so, I say openly that what is wrong is wrong. The Apostle Paul said that he had the responsibility and the obligation to preach the gospel. Because the Lord had met him, because he had the responsibility to introduce the Jesus he had met to them, and because, if they went to hell with sin because he did not preach to them, God would require their blood at his hand, he would fulfill that responsibility. So the Apostle Paul also denied himself and began to testify of Jesus, and because of that he went through many sufferings. I myself have also denied myself and followed in order to follow the Lord to this day, and so I have received much glory and the blessing of the Lord as well; but this continues until the day I go before the Lord.

A life of denying oneself and serving the gospel

I hate becoming an enemy to anyone. But to follow the Lord, I have to say that I will not go along with those who do not join in the work of the Lord, so I sometimes become their enemy. The sentiment of the East holds that one must not be angular, must not stick out, must not stand out, and holds that even a ministry must not stand out. But people in the West are not like that. Even when looking at the same word of God, they like a unique person who realizes what is in the word and says it, whatever the whole world may say. So when our books go out, they are amazed and say they are wonderful books. Of course, not all of them are like that. There are also many who reject them, saying that they disregard theologians. But some people, after reading them through, say they are the best and that this is a remarkable man. They send in testimonies of salvation, saying,

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"I read straight through the book written about being born again of water and the Spirit, and the sin in my heart was gone. I am no longer a sinner but a righteous person. I agree with what this man says." And they ask for books, spread the books out on the street, preach, and hand out the books; and if that still does not work, they ask us to make banners, put them up, preach, and preach the gospel. Whose way is that? It is the way of someone like me.

Long ago, even before I was born again, I picked up a Bible and read it, and thinking, "So this is what Jesus is like," I went straight before people and, holding up the Bible, began to preach, telling them what was in the Bible. In a busy downtown street so crowded that people were jostled along, I—a bachelor at the time and young in years—climbed up somewhere high and preached in a big, resounding voice. And ten years after I came to believe in Jesus, I met the Lord through the word. There was not a single person who told me this gospel concretely. Those who are called evangelicals ask me whether I have been born again. I am not afraid of a challenge. When someone challenges me, I tell them to ask whatever they like. "Have you been born again?" "I have." "Do you have no sin?" "I have none." "How were you born again?" "Jesus came to this earth, had my sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again, and He removed all my sins; so I have no sin." They look for something to find fault with, but there is nothing to find fault with. Our coworkers are the same. After reading our books, they immediately ask us to make banners, and one person holds the banner while another preaches and hands out the books. When people inside the Christian religion meet our brothers, there is no comparison. Our brothers win every time.

But there was a brother who used to be with us. I taught him

and even had him attend the mission school, but he would not yield his heart, so in the end I could not use him as a worker. He went into some large church and called me to say that he had taken on the pastor and the elders of that church, and even pastors from outside, with the word and had beaten them all. I said to him: those people are people with their eyes shut and you are a person with your eyes open, so it is only natural that there is no comparison; beating them is nothing at all. But what he wanted was for me to go and speak so that he could take over that church. I said to him: what matters is not that you beat people and take over a church; only when you obey according to the word of God and live denying yourself can you become a servant of God and accomplish the will of God; otherwise you will not overcome yourself and will not live according to the will of God. Anyone can preach the gospel. But it is through a person who denies himself according to the will of God, submits to the word of the Lord, and follows by faith that the Holy Spirit raises that person up as a worker of God and accomplishes the will of God. That is a servant of the Church of God. A person who does not even deny himself cannot do so.

Jesus came to this earth and denied Himself thoroughly and completely. In everyday life He did not display His power, and displayed it only when it was absolutely necessary. Even as He was hung on the Cross and dying, had He wanted to display His power, showing them His power would have been nothing at all. When the officers of the chief priests and the Roman soldiers came to arrest Jesus and asked who Jesus of Nazareth was, Jesus said, *"I am He" (John 18:5)*, and it is written in the word, *"They drew back and fell to the ground" (John 18:6)*. Because Jesus is God, when He was angered in His heart for a moment, thinking, "So these men have come to arrest Me," they fell to the ground at that one word. But Jesus did not reveal His divinity. As a

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human being, in order to accomplish the work of saving us by having the sin of mankind transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, becoming the sacrificial offering of atonement for the sin of mankind, dying, and rising again—in order to accomplish the will of the Father—He obeyed.

We too, if we are to testify of Jesus Christ, if we are to serve the gospel on this earth, must deny ourselves. People reject me and make a great fuss, but it is not their rejecting me that I fear; it is the gospel not being preached that I fear, and so I am a little careful. Dear fellow believers, our lives too are similar to the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus, too, lived denying Himself in order to obey the will of the Father; He humbled Himself and did not show off His power before us. He did not tell the disciples that He would punish them if they did not listen. He lowered Himself to their level, spoke so that they could understand, and waited for them; and then He told them that they must deny themselves, and He Himself denied Himself. So it is with you and me. If we are to serve the gospel on this earth, we must do the same.

A life that seeks the benefit of others

This age is a hard one in which to serve the gospel. To serve the gospel by doing the flower-calyx work, we must also fit in with the circumstances of the people of the world. We should do surely what we have agreed to do and surely receive what we are to receive, but there are times when people, while giving us work, ask us to do a little more that was not in the agreement. In fact, it is a bother, and it is something we do not have to do. But if it does not cost much money, even if it is hard, we should say that we will finish the work we were given first and then fix it for them; and when we fix one small thing for them, you cannot

imagine how grateful that person is. Ordinary people are not grateful when we do the work we agreed to do for the price they paid. It is the little extra done beyond what was agreed that makes them feel good and opens the door of their hearts. And they introduce us to other people. Our purpose is to serve the gospel by doing the flower-calyx work. We would like to do only what was agreed, but the people of the world are not like that. People very much like getting a little extra. When they buy something, if you do not give them a little extra, they say you are stingy, and if you give them a little extra, they say they will come and buy again next time.

We must often give crumbs of grace. While doing the flower-calyx work of the gospel, we must not dislike such things. We must not do things our own way. Realizing that people like such things, we must deny ourselves and put ourselves in the other person's place and think from his standpoint. At a place where we have gone to work, there are times when we notice that some small thing is broken. We think, "That person has neither the skill nor the tools to fix this; how hard it would be for him to do it," and then we say we will do it for him. And we tell him to contact us if a problem arises, and we look after him afterward as well. Then how grateful that person will be! If we treat one person that way, that person brings five people, and if we treat five people that way, twenty-five people come. Then work comes in without any need for separate advertising. This is how we must do our work. From the time we started the work we do, I started with the purpose of becoming people who benefit others and are loved by them. So in making things as well, we looked carefully, calculated in advance where problems might arise, and made them accordingly; and when people said the price was high, we considered that from their standpoint that could well be so, and explained it so that they could understand. Try working with

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this kind of heart, in this kind of way. If, doing the same work, you finish it off carelessly and quickly, just take the money and leave, and when they ask you to fix a little something here, you say that is their problem, then no work will ever come in again. The reason people buy the products of big companies is also that those companies take responsibility even afterward. If you are going to work, try doing it by knowing people's hearts well and making up for the part they find hardest. It costs a little, but not all that much. Some people may tell me not just to talk but to try doing it myself. If I did it, would I fail? If I did the work, I would make the work come in by itself; I would not go around advertising. People who have met me once want me. Once, a person who had done business with us was in very hard circumstances and, weeping, asked for even things not included in the agreement. Worried that the person might become discouraged and go wrong, I gave him what I did not have to give and told him not to cry but to live uprightly and well. Later I heard that with it he had done his duty toward someone he rightly had to take responsibility for, so I considered it a thing well done. That person has seen my face only once, yet even now he seeks me out.

Dear fellow believers, it is the same in business, and it is the same between husband and wife. It is the same in serving together, and the same in pastoral ministry. We must not minister in a way that works the brothers and sisters to the bone and throws them out when they are no longer needed. We must truly embrace them, supply what they need, and at the same time lead them so that they may be loved before the Lord, saying, "The word is like this; the Lord wants such things; we must live like this." If I teach them so that they are hated before the Lord, teaching them only to listen to what I say, and so cause them to be hated before the Lord, it is exactly the same as my killing

them. Dear fellow believers, we must minister, serve the Lord, and do the flower-calyx work for the benefit of others and for the benefit of the Lord. Wherever we are and whatever work we do, we must work that way for the Lord and for our family of faith. Then those people will love you, and we too will love you. Because the Lord loves us, we love the Lord, and because we do what the Lord wants, the Lord also fills us. Saying, *"I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5)*, He says that when we do the will of the Lord, He fills us so that we may bear more fruit.

Dear fellow believers, we must not just say that the world is hard and so no work comes in; we must look back once again. We must look back at how we have treated people up to now, and why people do not contact us even though among those they know there are many who could do this work, and we must turn around, realizing that we have treated people carelessly and have not sought the benefit of others. We must repent. If we treat even one person with great sincerity and work with sincerity, no advertising costs go out, so even by working only as far as our strength reaches, we can do the flower-calyx work abundantly and live well ourselves too. Among those who live as rich people in this world, there are many who live benefiting others. That is why the Bible says, *"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty" (Proverbs 11:24)*. If one lives only for oneself, one becomes poor, and if one gives much help to others, one becomes rich. This is the secret of being blessed that the Bible speaks of. The Lord says, *"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise" (Luke 6:31)*. It is simple. If I want to be treated well by you, I need only treat you well.

Since what I have is not mine, if I am to make it grow so that more benefit goes around, I must always think of two things. First, that much benefit may go to the Lord; and second, that

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much benefit may go to you. If I go on that way, I naturally come to live well together with others. Since I live receiving love, there is no need for me to look after what is mine. Business, ministry, the flower-calyx work, and serving the Lord must all be carried on in that way. Do not try to serve the Lord shallowly, with only the talents and abilities you have. If you try to serve the Lord with only those, the bottom is soon exposed. Give a little, and soon there is nothing left to give. You must keep giving while receiving supply from the Lord, and give while receiving supply.

There is something I realized when I was studying at university. When you do some work, a frame forms in your head by itself. But once that frame hardens, you cannot take in anything new. So I came to know that only by breaking it before a frame sets in your head, and by always studying with an empty mind and a new mind and renewing yourself, do you make progress. That is why I say, “Do not let your head harden; do not let a frame form in your head.” Only by breaking out of a mindset hardened in its own way can you develop and study many new things and also accept the advice of others well. Dear fellow believers, you cannot serve the Lord with your own way. You must throw away your own way. You must break it. Real learning requires research, and it does not end with research alone; you must actually apply it. If it is not proven in practice, that learning is a failure. Even in trying to serve the Lord, you must not let your head harden. A person whose head has hardened has only his own thoughts going around, and since nothing but what he has learned can enter his head and he learns nothing new, he is always marking time. He cannot even train people properly. Looking at and learning the word of the Lord, training others and being trained ourselves as well, we must keep studying and challenging ourselves and denying ourselves,

asking what would please the Lord. Just because you denied yourself yesterday does not mean there is nothing left to deny. You must deny yourself again and again.

The authority in heaven and on earth, received by denying Himself

The Lord came to this earth to become the sacrificial offering of atonement that saves us, and what the Lord did was a continuous denial of Himself. Denying and denying Himself again, He came this far. Being hung on the Cross was also something for which He had to deny Himself again. Even so, the Lord followed the will of the Father. The Father gave all authority in heaven and on earth to His Son. In the old days, people prayed only to the LORD God, but now He said that when all mankind prays to Jesus Christ, He answers their prayers. Just as the word says, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18)*, Jesus has that authority. How did He obtain it? By denying Himself, by obeying the will of the Father, He received such glorious authority, honor, and blessing. Although Jesus was originally the Son of God the Father, by coming to this earth and completing the work of saving us through His life of thirty-three years, He was officially acknowledged as having that authority.

We have come to know the love of God the Father through Jesus. We give thanks to the Lord, who made us know this love and made us the children of God. I hope that you and I, like the Lord, will deny ourselves and obey the will of the Father, and live serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this earth. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Those who know and believe in Jesus Christ rightly obtain eternal life

< John 17:1-26 >

"Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom

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You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

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The prayer Jesus offered before the Cross

The whole of John chapter 17 is the prayer Jesus offered to the Father before He was hung on the Cross and died, rose again, and went to God the Father. It is the prayer He offered at the point when, in a little while, He would be hung on the Cross and die, rise again from the dead, testify of it, and go up to heaven. If we read the content of this prayer, we can know what the heart of the Lord was like at that time. *"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" (John 17:1–2).* It means that the hour has come. Now, facing the work of being hung on the Cross, dying, rising again, and going up to heaven, Jesus is offering His prayer.

This prayer is a prayer asking the Father for help. Jesus had already accomplished everything. Now, lastly, because He had the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, He had to die as the price of that sin. He had to be hung on the Cross, be nailed, and go through every kind of humiliation. He is praying that He may carry out that work well, and complete well the work entrusted to Him. And He says that the Father gave the Son authority over all flesh in order to give eternal life to all whom the Father had given the Son, speaking of the work of accomplishing the will of God.

We need only hear this word and believe it. But if we look into the inside of this word, we can see that God made the universe; that although He knew that man would sin, He placed in the Garden of Eden the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life; that although He knew that man would sin, He permitted such things; and that in all of this there was the plan of God the Father. When God made heaven and earth and

the universe and made us human beings, when and how He made the spiritual beings of heaven is not separately written in the Bible. But if we look at the Bible, we can see that God made the angels as well. Behind the word that God gave the Son authority over all flesh, there are certain things that happened within the created world of God.

The fallen angel spoken of through the king of Babylon

In the Book of Isaiah there is this word. *"It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: How the oppressor has ceased, The golden city ceased! The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, The scepter of the rulers; He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke, He who ruled the nations in anger, Is persecuted and no one hinders. The whole earth is at rest and quiet; They break forth into singing. Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you, And the cedars of Lebanon, Saying, 'Since you were cut down, No woodsman has come up against us.' 'Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations. They all shall speak and say to you: 'Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us? Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, And worms cover you'" (Isaiah 14:3–11).*

This word was spoken about the king of Babylon. Telling them to compose a song and sing it about the king of Babylon,

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He says to sing, *"How the oppressor has ceased, The golden city ceased!" (Isaiah 14:4)*. The king of Babylon oppressed, overthrew, and trampled Israel, and God punishes the king of Babylon like this. Since all the kings of the world submitted to the king of Babylon, he thought himself high; but the point is, how has he who was so mighty become weak—you have become like us. There are times when God speaks in this way of the invisible world through the visible world. While punishing the king of Babylon, God tells them to compose a song and sing it about him, and says that his pomp has been brought down to Sheol, and even the sound of his stringed instruments has ceased.

And then He goes on to say this. *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?'" (Isaiah 14:12–17).*

The one whom God, while rebuking the king of Babylon, called *"O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Isaiah 14:12)* is an angel. The angel who was the first to oppose God, that devil who long ago enticed the serpent and caused man to fall, was originally an angel who praised God. Directly under God, he gloriously praised and worshiped God; to put it simply, we could say he was the one who presided over worship. But he betrayed God, saying that he wanted to do away with God, who was above

him, and sit above Him himself, and he gathered the angels together and opposed God.

While rebuking the king of Babylon, God is telling exactly that story. When the king of Babylon opposed the nation of Israel and laid it waste, He says, how have you become weak overnight; who knew that you would become like this? His authority was so high, he was so great, and he lacked nothing at all; yet he did not merely become like an ordinary man, but fell all the way to Sheol. That even the sound of his stringed instruments ceased means that he was stripped of every office and everything. He fell all the way to hell and lost even the office of playing stringed instruments and praising. God says that the maggot is spread under him and worms cover him, and then, saying, *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!" (Isaiah 14:12)*, He speaks of his sin. That sin was that he exalted himself, saying in his heart, *"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13–14)*.

This is the devil. What the devil does is oppose God, and the adversary is none other than the devil. That is why those who oppose God are called devils. It is not that the devil exists separately; if one opposes God, that itself becomes the devil. When God severely rebukes the king of Babylon, whom does He compare him with as He speaks? He is speaking of the fallen angel.

In the Book of Ephesians there appears the expression *"the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2)*. It means that there are those who hold the power of the air, that is, of the empty space that is neither this world nor heaven. They are none other

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than the adversaries of God, the fallen angels. Those spirits were driven down from heaven and entered the hearts of people, opposed the people of Israel who believed in God and their nation, and now on this earth they are opposing the disciples and the saints of Jesus Christ. But God brings down a miserable judgment on them, just as this word says. That Jesus is now praying, *"Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You" (John 17:1),* is related precisely to this matter.

The Son of God, who came to destroy the works of the devil

Why did the Lord come to this earth? There is a purpose for which the Lord came to this earth. Let us look at the word of First John. *"Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:7–10).*

That Jesus came to this earth is exactly as the word says: *"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8)*. Satan the devil drew all the people of this world, that is, all the creatures God had made, to himself and made them do the work of opposing God. The devil came into the world God had made, brought the people God had created in His own image over to his own side, and

made them oppose God the Father.

But God the Father sent His Son. The Son of God came in order to destroy the works of the devil. The devil had drawn all people and made them oppose God, but in doing away with that work, God did not do it by force Himself, nor did He do it by strength. He did it very righteously, by the truth. God the Father sent His Son, and when that Son received baptism from John, He transferred our sins onto the Son. And He made that Son be hung on the Cross and receive the judgment of sin, rise again from the dead, and become the Savior of this world. God has made it so that when we believe in what that Son did, we escape from the devil.

In fact, as we live on this earth we fight a spiritual war, and this war is a war between us and the devil, but before that it is a war between God and the fallen angel. God could have swept them away once and for all, but He did not. It was because He intended to receive glory from all His creatures, and also because the devil had opposed God the Father. God intended to overcome the devil very righteously, justly, and perfectly, so that no one could raise any objection. So, just as the word says, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16)*, God sent His Son to this earth and made Him do the work of completely saving people from the state of destruction into which the devil had cast them by opposing God and making people oppose God.

And He made Him do the work of making them obtain eternal life. He made Him do the work of making them live together with God, the work of making them live in the kingdom of heaven. He gave His creatures the right to become the children of God and gave them eternal life. God permitted them to live forever together with God, who lives forever. In order to accomplish that work, God sent His Son to this earth, and that

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Son had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all with the baptism He received from John. And now, the time having come, Jesus prays like this. *"Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You" (John 17:1).*

Since the time has come, He is asking to be able to carry out all the work Jesus was entrusted with, and asking for strength. Jesus is afraid right now. He has done the work up to having the sin of the world transferred to Him and bearing it with the baptism He received from John, but Jesus knows well the pain of being nailed through the hands and feet on the Cross and pouring out all His blood. It is because He is God. Yet because He had put on human flesh for a while, although He is God, He has to go through and suffer that pain righteously as a human being. So it is so very hard for Him. That is why He prays that the Son may be glorified, that He may carry out well the work entrusted to Him and so be able to glorify and exalt God the Father.

Also, the Father sent Jesus to save the people the Father had given Him, and Jesus preached all the word of the Father to them, and they too believed all the word Jesus preached. They believed that God the Father had sent Jesus and that Jesus had come from the Father. So He prays to be able to complete His last mission, to be glorified, and to be given strength to do all the work entrusted to Him. This is the last prayer of Jesus. Right after this prayer, Jesus goes straight to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray.

That night, Judas comes with the Roman soldiers to arrest Jesus. The people take Jesus away, put Him on trial, and have Jesus, who had no sin, nailed to the Cross. While nailed, Jesus prayed, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34),* and He cried out, *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (Matthew 27:46),* and died on the Cross. And as

He died, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. It means that now it has been perfectly accomplished. And He died and, on the third day, rose again just as He had promised.

God, who overcame not by force but by righteousness

All of this—our believing in Jesus and doing the work of the Lord as we live in this world—belongs to the work in which, in the midst of the war between God and the devil, God made us human beings and sent His Son to us, creatures who had sinned, saved us by His love, and righteously made us the children of God. God is showing the following fact before the devil. He is showing that for the creatures God made to become the children of God, to live with God in the kingdom of heaven, to enjoy eternal life, to enjoy such riches and glory—these are things God gives them, not things that can be obtained by the devil challenging God.

So the life of faith and everything we do in this world is a spiritual war. For us to believe in the Lord is to believe in the Lord, who is the LORD of hosts. The word *'hosts'* means that God, who made all things, governs, commands, rules over, and presides over all of them. We believe in that sovereignty. It is to acknowledge that the LORD of hosts, the God who exists by Himself, is the Creator who made all things, and the Absolute One who presides over and commands everything. But we failed to acknowledge that and fell into sin. Falling for the enticement of the devil, we became adversaries who oppose God. So what did God do? He sent His Son and saved us.

God said that He Himself would come in human flesh, and He came just as He said. And as He had promised to send Elijah,

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He sent Elijah, that is, He had John the Baptist lay his hands on the head of Jesus and baptize Him. With that baptism He had the sin of the world transferred to Jesus. Jesus bore all that sin and went to the Cross. And He accomplished it all. Thus He shattered and did away with the schemes of the devil, and the strength, the authority, and every power of the adversary. All the strength of the devil is gone, and now he goes down to the depths of Sheol and is judged. When God judges the devil, He judges him like this.

Because God has authority and power, is righteous, and does no evil, He does not act by His own strength. He acts very justly. That is why, when Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Here, *"thus"* is houtōs (οὕτως) in Greek, and it means that in this way—that is, in the most just, righteous, and perfect way—He removes our sins. Jesus had our sins transferred to Him with that baptism, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, and thereby removed our sins completely.

God does not act by force; He wants to receive glory righteously and justly. He wants His creatures to thank and praise Him of their own will, and He wants to receive glory in that way. He does not want what is done out of fear, under pressure and oppression by force. He wants them to praise God out of true respect and thankfulness. That is what He intends to do with us human beings, His creatures. So the Son of God came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, died and rose again, and destroyed the works of the devil. The Lord is saying: "It is finished. I have destroyed all the works of the devil. I have removed all the sins committed by falling for the enticement of the devil. If you only believe in Me, I will make you receive the remission of all sins, enjoy glory, and enjoy eternal life. I have

made provision for that to happen." The Lord is saying that He gives such blessings to those who believe.

Jesus, the Absolute One, who destroyed the works of the devil

That is why we believe in Jesus Christ as the LORD of hosts, as God, as the Lord. Jesus, who is our Ruler, our Commander, and our absolute Sovereign, is our God; and when we, being weak, committed sin and came to death, He had all our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment, and rose again from the dead, and thereby destroyed the sin the devil had brought upon us; and so we have come to receive the remission of sins by believing in what Jesus did for us. Before we fought the devil, the Lord first fought the devil and overcame him. He accomplished it all. And He rose again and said, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18–20),* and went up to heaven.

Therefore this war is not ours but God's, and God has destroyed the works of the devil. The devil made us oppose God, but God has destroyed all that work. He had all sins transferred to Him and received all the judgment. And He accomplished it all. The devil thought it would all be over if he had Jesus arrested and killed, but Jesus was hung on the Cross and accomplished it all. So the devil, knowing that he had failed, uses his tricks once again. He makes it so that people cannot believe that God came to this earth and removed all the sins the devil instilled in people,

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the sins people commit because of their weakness—that is, that He had them all transferred to Him, received the judgment, and justly saved them. So people do believe in Jesus, but the devil has completely hidden the baptism Jesus received from John.

The devil absolutely keeps people from speaking of this, keeps them from speaking of it even if they know it, and makes them afraid. If you speak of this, you are driven out by people and lose your livelihood. When I met the Lord through the word, I knew that the moment I spoke of this, I would be treated as a strange person. Even so, I said I would do it even if I became a fool and a beggar, even if it meant being left penniless. How could I not preach what God has done? Even if I died, I would do it. God knows well, too, that preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit is like striking a rock with an egg. I made up my mind, "Even so, I will do it. If even a single person on this earth comes to know and believe what God has done and becomes a child of God, I will do it." And I did just that. I did it fully expecting to be ruined. Then all my friends said of me that I was ruined. I had a few close friends from my school days, and one of them, thinking I had fallen into a wrong path and being so distressed by it, sent his family to persuade me; but when I suggested we talk it over with the word of God and preached the gospel to that family, the family packed up and left. After I came to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there was nothing that could break my resolve to do what God wants.

What Jesus asks in this prayer is precisely this. "Father, glorify this Son; let Me carry out well the work entrusted to Me." Because Jesus had a body, being hung on the Cross was the most painful thing for a human being. So He prays, *"Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him" (John 17:1–2).*

The point is that in the old days only God the Father held the authority of God, who has true authority, of God, who is the LORD of hosts; but now He has given it to the Son as well. He gave that authority to the Son, and for the Son also to receive love, respect, glory, and worship like God the Father, God had to send the Son, and the Son had to pay the price of sacrifice, remove the sins of His creatures, and save them. In that way He made the people of God become those who respect, love, and worship Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, and obey His commands, just as they respect God the Father. We know and believe the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—these three—as one God, and in particular Jesus Christ sits in the seat of the great white throne judgment. God gave all authority to judge to His Son as well. At the creation of heaven and earth, only the Father had authority, but He gave authority to His Son as well. So He sent that Son and made the Son do work worthy of it. Therefore we who believe cannot help but praise Jesus.

"That they may know … Jesus Christ whom You have sent"

Jesus then prayed like this. *"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3).* It means that God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth, and that whoever knows Him rightly obtains eternal life. What this means is that Jesus Christ is the One who was with the Father when He made this universe, at the creation of heaven and earth. Jesus is the Son of God the Father, but He is not inferior to the Father, and He is not One who made nothing at the creation of heaven and earth; He is the Creator, the Maker of all things. As the word says, *"All things*

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were made through Him" (John 1:3) and *"the world was made through Him" (John 1:10)*, all things came from Him, and are through Him, and return to Him. Here, *"Him"* is a word with the definite article attached; it refers to the only One, the One besides whom there is no other. God appeared in the world, and He is none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

He revealed Himself. The world was made through Him, and all things are through Jesus Christ and return to Him. Then why did God the Father send Jesus Christ to this earth? The point is that God revealed Himself fully in this world of creatures, in all of nature, but people do not know it. Their eyes have been darkened by sin, and they do not know it. Although they could know that God exists by looking at all things, they do not know it. So God Himself sent His Son, and through His Son He had the sins of you and me, that is, the sin of all mankind, transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, had Him hung on the Cross and die, and had Him rise again, and thereby revealed what kind of God He is—that He is the God of love who so loved the world.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). It means that by sending His Son in the form of a creature and revealing Himself, God revealed that He is love, that He is our Savior, that He is the One who gives eternal life, that He is the Judge, and that He is the Sovereign and the Ruler. This is the purpose for which God the Father created us human beings and the universe and all things in His Son. We do not know it, but God was together with the world of spiritual beings. When and how He made the angels does not appear in the Bible, but angels do appear in the Bible. Perhaps that world of angels is more glorious than man and superior to him. So in the Book of Hebrews there is the word,

"You have made him a little lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:7). When we lived as sinners in this world, we were a little lower than the angels, and even after receiving the remission of sins, since we have not yet been clothed with glory and do not yet live gloriously enjoying eternal life, we may still be a little lower. But when we go to the kingdom of the Lord, the angels become those who wait on us.

So it is those who know Jesus Christ rightly who receive the remission of sins and obtain eternal life. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the LORD of hosts. The word *'LORD'* (Jehovah) is, precisely, 'Yahweh,' which means the God who exists by Himself. He is the One who created us, our Savior, and the One who gives us eternal life. If we know Him rightly and know and believe rightly what He did, we obtain eternal life. Because the word of God is so deep, there is so much to say even with a single verse. Jesus prayed like this. *"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:4–5).*

Originally, Jesus was with the Father. He was with the Father, was glorious together with Him, and created all the worlds together with Him. When the adversary of God opposed God, God did not act by force, but shattered that power righteously and justly. He removed sin completely.

"The right to become children of God"

And God gives those who believe an authority higher than the angels. That is the right to become children of God. However high an angel may be, he is not a child of God. But if a person

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believes in what Jesus Christ did, that is, if he knows and believes that Jesus Christ is the Ruler and the Sovereign, the Savior who removed all our sins, and the One who gives eternal life, he receives the right to become a child of God. To be a child of God means to be God's own offspring. God's own offspring is higher than the angels. That is why the fallen angel is trampled underfoot. Saying, "Will you exalt yourself to the ends of heaven? You will be brought down to Sheol," God shuts him away. Therefore, a person who does not believe is an adversary.

A person who believes that Jesus Christ is the Ruler, the Sovereign, the Absolute One, the Commander, the Savior, and the One who gives eternal life, that He is the same God as God the Father, the Savior, and the Master of love, becomes a child of God; and a person who does not believe this fact becomes an adversary. An adversary comes to face the punishment an adversary receives and enters hell. He enters Gehenna, that is, the burning hell.

Do you believe? Do you believe that Jesus is the Ruler, the Sovereign, the Commander, the Savior, and the One who gives us eternal life? Do you believe that He is the Savior who set us free from sin and delivered us from the devil? Because Jesus has authority, we who believe in Him also have authority. We have obtained the right to become children of God. The very name Jesus Christ means the King of kings who has become the Savior. That name of Jesus Christ overcomes the devil. When we say, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you, Satan the devil, get away; adversary, get away," the adversary is driven out.

Since that Lord has saved us, how could we not believe in Him, not obey His commands, not love Him, not respect Him—how could we not submit to Him? How could we become adversaries? A person who believes is not an adversary. But a person who does not believe is opposing God. We must not

become adversaries. We must obtain eternal life by faith. Eternal life is a good thing. Becoming a child of God is a good thing. It is living gloriously, and obtaining glory together with God. *"Glory"* means prospering. We give thanks to the Lord, who has given us such a blessing.

I hope that there will not be even a single person among us who becomes an adversary. Because if you become an adversary, you have to suffer the suffering the devil suffers, I hope that at least in the church I am pastoring there will not be a single such person. I believe that those all over the world who read our books will, by reading those books and believing, escape from the hand of the adversary of God, and receive the blessing of escaping from the adversary. We must not become adversaries. We must become those who are loved by God, and those who love God. I believe that you have become such people. So when we know rightly about Jesus Christ, we become those who are loved, those who believe, and those who obtain eternal life.

Those who know and believe in Jesus Christ rightly

There is something you need to know. A being that has all three of these—knowing (知), feeling (情), and willing (意)—is called a personal being. It is a being that knows rightly, feels, and acts. God is a personal being who has knowing, feeling, and willing, and He knows everything. Even as I preach the word, I can only be so thankful. Dear fellow believers, do you think that believing in Jesus, confessing Jesus as the Savior, and calling Jesus Lord is nothing at all? That is why I say that the Lord is the LORD of hosts. The Old Testament keeps saying *"the LORD of hosts."* He who is the Absolute One, the Ruler, the

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Commander, and the Creator commands man, His creature, but man does not listen to His word and becomes an adversary. Falling for the enticement of the devil, man becomes an adversary.

In the age of the New Testament, the Lord saved us from the adversary. He destroyed the works of the devil. Now, do we have sin or not? The Lord has removed it all. The Lord Himself came in a human body through the body of Mary, had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, received all the judgment on the Cross and accomplished it all, and rose again and gave eternal life to those who believe. And He gave the right to become children of God. He has us serve this gospel and do the flower-calyx work, and in a little while He will come to take us. In a little while we will go before the Lord. Then, as befits children of God, we will enjoy together the riches and glory that God enjoys. Knowing and believing that the day to leave this earth will come, I am so very thankful, so very thankful.

This world is increasingly becoming a world that makes material things its god and opposes God. Therefore, as for the work of preaching the gospel, now is a good time to preach the gospel, and if not now, it will be hard to do. So that the people of the world too may know who Jesus Christ is, we must do this work of the gospel now.

I am so very thankful. The Lord has become the LORD of hosts for us and saved us, has given us eternal life, and has made us know the Lord. As much as we know the Lord, we want to believe well with our hearts, enjoy eternal life, and live serving this gospel of the water and the Spirit while giving thanks to God. I pray that the Lord will bless us, and that He will make this truth known to those who do not know it. ✉

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CHAPTER

18

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John Chapter 18 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

John 18:1–11— how would the word of Jesus, *"Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"* be explained with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

John 18:1–11 is not an event in which Jesus was helplessly arrested by people. Jesus already knew all that would come upon Him, and because He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, He went forward of His own will to bear that sin and receive the judgment of the Cross. The passage shows the divinity of Jesus, His love that protects the disciples, and His obedience in accepting the cup the Father had given Him in order to save mankind.

1. Jesus knew all that would come upon Him

Jesus went with His disciples into a garden across the Brook Kidron. Matthew and Mark record this place as Gethsemane. Because this was a place where Jesus often met with His disciples, Judas Iscariot also knew it well.

Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him and that he would come with a detachment of troops and officers. Even so, He did not flee to another place.

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"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?'" (John 18:4).

Jesus was not arrested without knowing what was going to happen. Jesus, who had borne all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, now went forward of His own accord in order to receive the judgment of those sins on the Cross. The arrest of Jesus was not an accidental failure, but the process by which the work of salvation God had ordained was moving toward the Cross.

2. Judas Iscariot followed Jesus closely, but he had no true faith

Judas Iscariot went about with Jesus, heard the word, and saw countless signs. But he did not receive Jesus into his heart as the Son of God and his own Savior. In the end, he came to arrest Jesus, bringing a detachment of troops and officers sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees.

That they came with lanterns, torches, and weapons shows that they treated Jesus like a dangerous criminal. But in reality, the ones who were in darkness were not Jesus but they themselves. Jesus was the light of the world, but they did not believe in the light and rather tried to get rid of it.

This shows that one is not saved merely by the fact of having been near Jesus or of having religious knowledge. One must believe with the heart that Jesus is the Savior who bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

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3. The word *"I am He"* reveals the divine authority of Jesus

When Jesus asked, *"Whom are you seeking?"* they answered, *"Jesus of Nazareth."* Jesus did not hide, but declared, *"I am He."* Then those who had come to arrest Jesus drew back and fell to the ground.

This shows the fact that Jesus was not someone who was helplessly arrested, overpowered by human strength. He is God, who created all things by His word, and He had the authority to drive away in an instant those who had come to arrest Him.

In Matthew 26:53, Jesus said that if He asked the Father, the Father could send Him more than twelve legions of angels. Nevertheless, He did not use that authority to save Himself. It was because only if He was arrested and hung on the Cross could sinners be saved from sin and judgment.

4. Jesus protected the disciples while giving Himself up

When Jesus heard that they were seeking Him, He said as follows.

"I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way" (John 18:8).

Even at the moment of His arrest, the Lord protected the disciples first. While He Himself was being arrested, He told them to let the disciples go. This fulfilled the word that He would lose none of those whom God the Father had entrusted to Him.

In the way Jesus went forward alone and let the disciples go, the love of the Savior who takes the place of sinners is revealed. Jesus had no sin, but He Himself received in their place the punishment that sinners had to receive. Jesus, the one Person,

bore the sin of all the people of the world and received the judgment of the Cross, and thereby delivered those who believe from sin and destruction.

5. The salvation of God could not be accomplished by the sword of Peter

Wanting to protect Jesus, Peter drew his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest. In Peter's heart there was loyalty that loved the Lord, but he did not yet fully understand the plan of salvation of God.

Jesus said to Peter, *"Put your sword into the sheath."* In Matthew, He said, *"All who take the sword will perish by the sword,"* and Luke records that Jesus touched the ear of Malchus and healed him.

The salvation of God is not accomplished by human strength or violence. If Peter had stopped Jesus from being arrested, he would rather have hindered the will of God to save mankind through the Cross. The power to overcome the power of sin and Satan lies not in a human sword, but in the gospel of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection that Jesus accomplished.

6. The cup the Father had given was the Cross where the judgment of sin was received

Jesus said to Peter:

"Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" (John 18:11).

This cup refers to the suffering, the death, and the judgment of sin that Jesus would receive on the Cross. In Gethsemane,

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Jesus prayed that this cup might pass, but He asked that not His own will but the will of the Father be done.

The reason Jesus had to drink the cup of the Cross was that He had already had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. Because the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had borne that sin, had to receive the judgment of sin in the place of sinners by being hung on the Cross, shedding His blood, and dying.

Therefore, the Cross is not a death that Jesus suddenly suffered without any relation to His baptism. The event of His bearing the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John led to the blood and the judgment of the Cross.

— He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John.

— He bore that sin and went to the Cross.

— He received the judgment of sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross.

— He overcame the power of sin and death by rising again from the dead.

— He gave the remission of sins and eternal life to those who believe in this salvation.

This is the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

7. The arrest of Jesus was not the defeat of the work of salvation but the beginning of obedience

In the eyes of people, Jesus looked like a defeated man who was betrayed and arrested. But in reality, Jesus gave Himself up as the offering of salvation. It was not that the people had the authority to arrest Him; rather, Jesus laid down His own life of

His own will in order to save sinners.

Jesus had no sin, but He bore our sins with the baptism He received from John. Therefore, that He was arrested, bound, and dragged to the Cross was precisely because of our sins. Jesus drank to the end the cup the Father had given Him, declared on the Cross, *"It is finished!"* and rose again from the dead and became the perfect Savior.

Conclusion

John 18:1–11 is not the story of Jesus being arrested because He had no strength. Jesus knew all that would come upon Him, revealed His divine authority by declaring, *"I am He,"* and after protecting the disciples, He was arrested of His own will.

Peter tried to protect Jesus with a sword, but Jesus said, *"Put your sword into the sheath."* It was because the salvation of mankind was not to be accomplished by human strength, but had to be accomplished by Jesus drinking the cup He had received from the Father.

Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and He bore those sins and received the judgment of sin in our place by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood and dying. And by rising again from the dead, He saved those who believe from sin, judgment, and death. Therefore, we must not rely on human zeal or our own righteousness, but must believe with the heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

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John 18:12–14—what meaning does it have within the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Caiaphas said *"it was expedient that one man should die for the people"*?

John 18:12–14 shows the fact that it was not because He had no strength that Jesus was arrested, but that He let Himself be bound in order to bear all the sin of mankind, which He had had transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and to receive the judgment of the Cross. It also testifies, through the words of Caiaphas, that Jesus, the one Person, is the Savior who would die in the place of all sinners.

1. It was not because He had no strength that Jesus was bound

The detachment of troops, the captain, and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. On the surface, it looks as if a large armed force arrested a helpless Jesus. But if we look at the word just before this, Jesus knew all that would come upon Him, and He Himself made known that He was the One they were seeking. Even when Peter tried to resist with a sword, Jesus said, *"Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"*

Therefore, Jesus was not arrested by yielding to the strength of people. He voluntarily gave up His own body in order to accomplish the will of God the Father to save sinners. It was not that the people who bound Jesus had true authority; rather, Jesus entrusted Himself into their hands.

2. Jesus, who had no sin, stood in the place of a sinner

Jesus is the Son of God, who has no sin at all. Even so, He was bound like a sinner and dragged to the place of questioning. The reason is that Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* And the next day, John pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Jesus was not bound because of His own sin. Because He had the sin of mankind passed down from Adam and all the sins people commit throughout their lives transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, He stood in the place of a sinner and was bound. Just as Isaiah prophesied, the LORD laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all.

3. The true High Priest, who stood before the religious authority of Annas and Caiaphas

The people led Jesus first to Annas. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. Annas and Caiaphas were people who held religious authority before the people, but they used that authority to try to condemn and kill Jesus, who had no sin.

But the true High Priest of heaven is Jesus. Hebrews says that Jesus came as *"High Priest of the good things to come"* and that *"with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."*

The high priest of the Old Testament passed the sins of the people onto the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands and

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offered the sacrifice of atonement. To fulfill this foreshadowing, John, the representative of this earth, baptized Jesus and passed the sin of mankind onto His body. Jesus, the High Priest of heaven, bore that sin and gave His own body as the sacrificial offering of atonement.

4. The words of Caiaphas prophesied the substitutionary death of Jesus

Caiaphas had earlier said that *"it was expedient that one man should die for the people."* The intention of Caiaphas was a political calculation to kill the one man Jesus and so preserve their nation and their position from Rome. But through those words, God testified in advance of the substitutionary death of Jesus.

John 11:51–52 explains its meaning as follows.

"Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad."

Caiaphas tried to get rid of Jesus, but the words that came out of his mouth became a prophecy testifying that Jesus would die in the place of all mankind. The death of Jesus was not a death for one nation only, but a death for saving from sin the sinners scattered throughout the whole world and gathering them as the children of God.

5. "One man dying for the people" is the principle of substitution

Because the wages of sin is death, originally every sinner had to be judged and die because of his own sins. But Jesus came as one Man, bore all the sin of mankind, and was judged in the place of all people.

The reason the death of Jesus on the Cross could become a death for the sin of all people is that He first had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. He bore sin with His baptism, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from the dead.

Therefore, the binding of Jesus and the Cross are not events separate from each other.

1. Jesus came to this earth in the flesh.

2. He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John.

3. He bore that sin and was bound and questioned.

4. He received the judgment of all sins in our place by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood and dying.

5. He became the eternal Savior of those who believe by rising again from the dead.

This is the work of salvation accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

6. Because Jesus was bound, those who believe have been released from sin

Jesus was bound in our place so that we might be released from sin and judgment. Jesus received the condemnation we had

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to receive, and He bore in our place the punishment of death we had to receive.

Therefore, a person who believes with the heart in the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of sins. Because God has already brought down the judgment of all sins on Jesus, He does not demand the price of the same sins again from a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Here lies the reason the Bible says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."*

The Holy Spirit testifies of the truth that Jesus is the Son of God and that He accomplished perfect salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. A person who believes in this gospel with the heart receives the remission of sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God.

Conclusion

John 18:12–14 is not simply a word recording that Jesus was arrested and led to Annas. It is the word of salvation in which Jesus, who had no sin, had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John and let Himself be bound in order to bear the judgment of that sin.

The words Caiaphas spoke, that *"it was expedient that one man should die for the people,"* testified in advance that Jesus, the one Person, would die in the place of all mankind. It was not because He had no strength that Jesus was arrested; He gave up His own body in order to save us from sin and judgment.

Because Jesus was bound, we have been released from sin; because Jesus was judged, we have escaped condemnation; and because Jesus rose again from the dead, we have obtained eternal

life. This is the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit revealed in John 18:12–14.

John 18:15–18—how can we know, through the denial of Peter, the weakness of man that needs the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

The word of John 18:15–18 reveals that Peter, who had boasted that he would follow Jesus to the end, was a weak person who could not keep his faith by his own strength. But Jesus already knew that Peter would deny Him, and with the baptism He received from John He had even the sins Peter would commit in the future transferred to His own body. Therefore, this word shows the weakness of man and, together with it, the perfect salvation of Jesus, who bore all those sins.

1. Peter loved Jesus, but he followed at a distance

When Jesus was arrested and led to the house of the high priest, most of the disciples scattered, but Peter followed Jesus together with another disciple. In Peter there was a heart that loved Jesus, and there was also a desire to see what would happen to the Lord.

But the Synoptic Gospels record that Peter followed Jesus *"at a distance."* He did not want to leave Jesus, but he was afraid that the fact that he was a disciple of Jesus would be revealed. In Peter's heart there were both the faith that loved the Lord and the fear of the flesh that wanted to preserve his own life.

This sight shows that a person cannot follow the Lord to the end by his own will and resolution alone. A moment before,

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Peter had wielded a sword and tried to protect Jesus, but when the situation changed, he began to be gripped by fear.

2. Peter trusted in his own resolution

Jesus had already said to Peter as follows.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times" (John 13:38).

But Peter could not accept the word that he would deny Jesus. He boasted that he could even lay down his life for the Lord. It was not that Peter said so in order to lie. At that moment he sincerely thought that he could follow the Lord to the end.

The problem lay in the fact that Peter trusted himself more than he trusted Jesus. He regarded his own resolution and loyalty as more certain than the word Jesus had spoken about him. But however good a purpose a person holds and however strongly he resolves, he cannot overcome his own flesh and fear by himself.

Faith does not begin with trusting oneself, saying, "I will never fall." It begins with acknowledging what a weak person one is, and believing the word of Jesus, who fully saved even such a person.

3. Peter's weakness was revealed before a small question

The servant girl who kept the door asked Peter, *"You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?"* Peter was not in a situation of severe torture or a direct threat to his life. He had only received the question of a servant girl, yet he answered, *"I am not."*

This stands in contrast to Jesus, who a moment before had

not hidden Himself before the soldiers but had said, *"I am He."* Jesus made known who He was and let Himself be arrested in order to save the disciples, but Peter denied his relationship with Jesus in order to save himself.

Through this we can know how weak the flesh of man is. Even a great resolution made in a time of peace can easily collapse when fear comes. Peter's failure does not mean that he did not love Jesus at all; it shows the fact that human love and will alone cannot fully follow the Lord.

4. Peter stood among those who opposed Jesus

Verse 18 records that the servants and officers had made a fire of coals and stood warming themselves, and that Peter was with them as well. Jesus was being questioned inside, and Peter was outside, warming himself together with the people who had arrested Jesus and brought Him there.

Peter had followed Jesus as far as the house of the high priest, but he could not make known which side he himself belonged to. While he loved Jesus in his heart, he tried to hide that relationship before people.

Even a person who has received the remission of sins can fear the eyes and threats of people if he relies on his own flesh. Being afraid of looking different from the people of the world, he may hide the gospel he believes, or even act like a person who has nothing to do with Jesus. Therefore, the saints must not trust in their own boldness, but must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and rely on the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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5. Jesus already knew the sin Peter would commit

Jesus did not come to know of Peter's denial only after the event happened. He knew in advance and said that Peter would deny Him three times. Nevertheless, Jesus did not forsake Peter.

That Jesus washed Peter's feet before He was hung on the Cross is also connected with this fact. Jesus knew even the sins Peter would commit in the future through his weakness, and He taught him that He had borne even those sins.

The sin of the world that Jesus bore with the baptism He received from John also included the sin of Peter denying Jesus. Although Peter had not yet committed that sin, Jesus had already had all the sins of his whole life transferred to His own body. And He bore those sins and received the judgment of sin in his place by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood and dying.

Therefore, the salvation of Peter did not depend on his perfect loyalty. He was not saved because he did not fall; he was saved because he believed in Jesus, who bore all his sins.

6. The gospel of the water and the Spirit raises up again a person who has failed

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a word that makes a person hide his sins and failures. Rather, it makes him acknowledge how weak he is and how he cannot help but commit sin. At the same time, it makes him believe the fact that Jesus has completely borne all those sins.

When Peter realized the fact that he had denied Jesus, he went outside and wept bitterly. But Peter's tears did not pay the price of that sin. What removed his sin was the work of salvation of Jesus, who bore that sin with the baptism He received from

John and was judged on the Cross.

When a person who has received the remission of sins commits sin through weakness, he must acknowledge that wrong before God. And he must believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus bore and removed even that sin. Then, instead of being gripped by guilt and running away from the Lord, he can come again by faith to the Lord, who loved him to the end.

7. The Holy Spirit raised up the weak Peter as a witness of the gospel

Peter denied Jesus even before a servant girl, but Jesus, who had risen again from death, came to him again. Jesus asked Peter three times, *"Do you love Me?"* and said, *"Feed My sheep."*

Also, in Luke, Jesus said to Peter, *"I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."* Jesus did not look only at Peter's failure, but looked ahead even to his returning and becoming a worker who would strengthen the faith of others.

Later, Peter, having received the Holy Spirit, no longer concealed Jesus before the high priest and the rulers. He boldly testified of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This was not because a strong human will changed Peter, but because the Holy Spirit worked in his heart that believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Conclusion

John 18:15–18 shows, through Peter's first denial, how

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easily human resolution and will can collapse. Peter loved Jesus, but he tried to follow the Lord by his own strength, and before a small question he denied the fact that he was a disciple of Jesus.

But Jesus knew all of Peter's weakness and the sins he would commit in the future. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus had Peter's denial and all the sins that we human beings commit throughout our lives transferred to His own body. And He bore those sins and received the judgment of all sins in our place by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and He completed salvation by rising again from the dead.

Therefore, true faith is not trusting in one's own loyalty and will. It is believing that Jesus removed all the sin of mankind with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, while acknowledging one's own weakness. A person who has this faith does not stay down in sin when he fails, but can rise again, looking to the Lord who loved him to the end, and live following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

John 18:19–24—what does it show within the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus, who had no sin, received unjust questioning and shame?

John 18:19–24 is the scene in which Annas questions Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine, an officer strikes Jesus, who had no sin, and then Jesus is sent, still bound, to Caiaphas. On the surface it looks as if the religious leaders, holding authority, are judging Jesus, but in reality Jesus was going the way of suffering of His own will, having borne all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, in order to receive the judgment of the Cross.

1. The question of the high priest was not for learning the truth

In verse 19, the high priest asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. He was not trying to hear and believe the word of Jesus; he was trying to find grounds to condemn Jesus and to make an issue of the disciples as well.

Matthew and Mark record that the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony in order to kill Jesus. They were not trying to find out whether Jesus actually had any sin; having already decided to kill Jesus, they sought evidence to justify their decision.

A person who comes to the word of God must also examine his heart first. If one tries to judge the word in order to make one's own thoughts and religious standards out to be right, one comes to stand in the same place as those who questioned Jesus. Before the word of God, one must lay down one's own judgment and accept by faith who Jesus is and what salvation He accomplished.

2. Jesus taught the truth of salvation openly

Jesus said, *"I spoke openly to the world."* His doctrine was not a secret teaching imparted privately to only some people. Jesus taught the word of God openly in the synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews gathered.

Jesus testified that He was the Son of God whom God the Father had sent, the bread of life, the light of the world, the door of the sheep, and the good shepherd. He also said that a person must be born again of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God.

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The salvation Jesus accomplished was also revealed as a clear historical work. The Son of God came to this earth in the flesh, had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and bore that sin and shed His blood and died on the Cross. And He completed salvation by rising again from the dead.

Through the written word, the Holy Spirit testifies of the fact that this salvation Jesus accomplished is true. Therefore, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a human feeling or a religious experience, but the truth of salvation that Jesus Himself accomplished.

3. Jesus told them to confirm the testimony of those who had heard

Jesus said, *"Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them."* Because there was no falsehood in the word of Jesus that needed to be hidden, He told them to confirm it through those who had heard Him directly.

It was not that Jesus had been arrested for committing sin. Many people gave false testimony, but their testimonies did not agree with one another, and no true evidence was found that could condemn Jesus.

Jesus had no sin at all, but He was bound and questioned like a sinner. The reason is that He had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. Jesus stood in the position of a sinner, bearing not His own sins but our sins.

4. The officer struck Jesus without verifying the truth

When Jesus told them to confirm His teaching with those who had heard it, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand. He did not examine whether the word of Jesus was right or wrong. Thinking that Jesus had challenged the authority of the high priest, he used violence.

The officer feared the position of the high priest, but he did not recognize God the Creator, who stood before him. A sinner struck Jesus, who had no sin, and a creature questioned the Creator.

That did not mean, however, that the officer and the religious leaders had greater authority than Jesus. Jesus is God, who can drive them away in an instant. But because He had borne the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He received in their place the shame and the punishment that sinners had to receive.

The word Isaiah had prophesied, *"I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting,"* was being fulfilled.

5. Jesus told them to judge by the truth and by evidence

Jesus said to the officer who had struck Him, *"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"*

Jesus did not take emotional revenge on the person who had struck Him. But neither did He simply accept falsehood and injustice as they were. He made clear the fact that if He had done wrong, they should bear witness of that wrong, and that if He

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had not done wrong, there was no reason to strike Him.

When discerning the gospel of the water and the Spirit, too**,** we must take as our standard not a person's position or tradition, but the word of the Scriptures. We must confirm through the Scriptures why Jesus said, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,"* when He received baptism from John, and why He bore the sin of the world and was hung on the Cross.

Just as it is written in the word, Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross in our place, and rose again from the dead. Accepting this fact with the heart is the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

6. Jesus was struck because of our iniquities

Jesus had no sin of His own for which He had to be questioned or struck. Nevertheless, Jesus was struck by people and suffered mockery and shame. Isaiah 53:5 says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities."*

The baptism, the suffering, and the Cross of Jesus are one connected work of salvation. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. Because He bore that sin, He received in their place the shame and the punishment that sinners had to receive, and He shed His blood and died on the Cross.

In the suffering of Jesus, the love of God that saves sinners and the righteousness of God that surely judges sin are revealed together. God did not overlook our sins without any judgment. He made Jesus bear all the sin of mankind, and brought down the judgment for that sin on His own Son.

Therefore, a person who believes with the heart in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross is saved from all sins and judgment.

7. Jesus, who was bound, is the true High Priest of heaven

Annas could not find any wrong in Jesus, but he did not release Him. He sent Jesus, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.

People bound Jesus like a sinner, but in reality Jesus is the High Priest of heaven, who removes all the sin of mankind. Hebrews 9:12 says of Christ, "*With His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*"

Jesus, the High Priest of heaven, gave not the blood of animals but His own body and blood as the sacrificial offering of atonement. He bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and obtained eternal redemption by paying the price of sin with His own blood on the Cross.

By being bound, Jesus released those bound by sin; by being judged, He delivered those who believe from condemnation; and by rising again from the dead, He gave eternal life.

8. A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows who has true authority

If we look only at the sight of Annas and the officers questioning and striking Jesus, it looks as if they have authority and Jesus is powerless. But true authority belongs to Jesus. Jesus is God, who created all things, the Savior who saves sinners, and

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the Judge who will judge all people on the last day.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows that it was not because He had no strength that Jesus suffered, but that He bore that suffering of His own will in order to save us from sin. Therefore, there is no need to look at the threats of those who oppose the gospel and fear them as if they held the final authority.

The true authority given to a person who has received the remission of sins is not authority to lord it over others, but the authority of becoming a child of God and preaching the gospel of life. A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must keep in his heart the salvation Jesus accomplished, and boldly preach it to those who do not yet know this truth.

Conclusion

John 18:19–24 shows Jesus, who is the truth, and the religious leaders, who rejected that truth. Jesus testified of His doctrine openly, and in His words and in the things He did there was no sin to be condemned. But instead of verifying the truth, the people struck and bound Jesus, who had no sin.

That Jesus received such questioning and shame was because He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. Jesus bore that sin and went to the Cross and received the judgment of sin in our place, and He rose again from the dead and became the perfect Savior of those who believe.

Therefore, we must not evaluate Jesus according to religious authority or human judgment, but must believe with the heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished with His word and His work. A person who believes that Jesus

removed all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection obtains the remission of sins and eternal life.

John 18:25–32—what does this word say?

John 18:25–32 shows side by side the scene in which Peter denies Jesus three times and the scene in which Jesus is led to the judgment seat of Pilate. Peter's denial reveals the fact that faith cannot be kept by human will and resolution alone, and Jesus being handed over to Pilate was the process by which the death on the Cross that the Lord had foretold was being fulfilled. Seen from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this word shows the work of salvation of Jesus, who bore sin with the baptism He received from John and was going forward toward the judgment of the Cross in order to save weak sinners.

1. Peter's denial reveals the weakness of man

Peter had boasted to Jesus, *"I will lay down my life for Your sake."* In the Garden of Gethsemane, too, he had taken up a sword and tried to protect Jesus. But when Jesus was arrested and danger came upon him as well, Peter denied before people the fact that he was a disciple of Jesus.

One of the servants of the high priest was a relative of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off. He testified that he had seen with his own eyes that Peter was in the garden with Jesus. Even so, Peter denied Jesus again, and at that moment a rooster crowed.

This does not mean that Peter did not love Jesus. Peter loved

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Jesus, but with his own resolution and courage alone he could not overcome the fear of death. Man is a weak being who cannot keep perfect faith before God by his own will.

2. The crowing of the rooster shows that the word of Jesus was fulfilled exactly

Before Peter denied Him, Jesus had already said, *"The rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times."* That a rooster crowed when Peter denied Jesus for the third time means that the word of Jesus was fulfilled just as He said.

Jesus knew what kind of person Peter was, and even in what circumstances he would fall. Nevertheless, He did not forsake Peter. The act of Jesus washing the disciples' feet contains the meaning of salvation: with the baptism He received from John, He had borne and washed away even all the sins Peter would commit in the future.

Jesus is not One who saves a person because that person never falls even once. He is the One who, while knowing man's weakness and even the sins he will commit in the future, bears all those sins and saves him.

3. Peter's denial is also included in the sin Jesus bore

That Peter denied Jesus was clearly a sin. Though he knew Jesus, he said that he did not know Him in order to survive. But with the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only the sins Peter had already committed but also the sins he would commit in the future transferred to His own body. Peter's denial, too, was included in the sin of the world that Jesus bore.

That Peter wept bitterly shows that he realized his weakness and his sin, but his tears did not pay the price of sin. The price of sin was borne by Jesus alone. Jesus bore Peter's sin with the baptism He received from John, and He received the judgment of that sin in his place by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood.

Therefore, salvation is not accomplished by a sinner resolving never to fall again. It is received when one believes that Jesus completely removed all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

4. The Jewish religious leaders tried to kill Jesus while keeping outward purity

The Jewish religious leaders led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium of Pilate. But they did not go into the Praetorium, so that they might avoid being defiled before eating the Passover feast. Outwardly they were trying to keep the ordinances of the Passover, while in their hearts they were trying to kill Jesus, who had no sin.

This sight shows the fact that the heart of a person cannot be made clean by outward religious rites alone. Even if a person keeps worship, the feasts, and the ordinances of the law, if sin remains as it is in his heart, he cannot become righteous before God. What cleanses sin is not a person's religious deeds, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not put forward his own religious righteousness. He acknowledges that in his own heart, too, there is weakness like Peter's and evil like that of the religious leaders, and he believes in the salvation of the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished.

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5. Jesus had no sin, but He was accused as an evildoer

When Pilate asked what accusation they brought against Jesus, the Jews answered that if Jesus were not an evildoer, they would not have delivered Him up. But they could not make clear any specific sin that Jesus had committed.

Jesus is the Son of God, who by nature has no sin at all. Even so, He stood in the place of a sinner because He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. Jesus was not tried because of sins He had committed; because He had borne the sin of all the people of the world, He stood in the place of judgment in the form of a sinner.

Jesus, who had no sin, received in our place the accusation, the condemnation, and the punishment that sinners had to receive. This is the righteousness of God and the love of God toward sinners.

6. That Jesus was handed over to Pilate was the process for fulfilling the death on the Cross

Pilate told the Jews to take Jesus and judge Him according to their law. But they answered, *"It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death."* The Gospel of John testifies that this happened in order to fulfill what Jesus had said about what kind of death He would die.

Jesus had earlier said, *"And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself."* This was a word pointing to the fact that Jesus would be hung on the Cross and die. The Jews handing Jesus over to Pilate led in the end toward Jesus being hung on the Cross and dying.

People accused Jesus and tried to kill Him with evil intent,

but even in the midst of that, God fulfilled the word by which He intended to save sinners. It was not because He had no strength that Jesus was handed over to Pilate. He walked that way of His own will in order to be judged on the Cross for all the sin of mankind that He had borne with the baptism He received from John.

7. The gospel of the water and the Spirit was completed with the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection

The Cross of Jesus cannot be thought of separately from the baptism He received from John. Jesus first had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. And He paid the price of sin by bearing that sin and being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and He overcame sin and death by rising again from the dead.

The baptism He received from John is the work by which Jesus bore the sin of mankind, and the blood of the Cross is the work by which He received the judgment of the sin He had borne. The resurrection shows that Jesus overcame the power of sin and death and became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

Therefore, to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not merely to acknowledge the fact that Jesus died on the Cross. It is to believe with the heart the fact that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross in our place, and completed salvation by rising again from the dead.

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Conclusion

John 18:25–32 shows side by side the weakness of man and the perfect salvation of Jesus. Peter trusted in his own resolution, but in the face of fear he denied Jesus. The Jewish religious leaders kept outward purity, yet in their hearts they tried to kill Jesus. In this way, one cannot escape from sin by human will and religious deeds.

But Jesus did not forsake people who were weak and full of sin like Peter. He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and He bore that sin and went forward toward the judgment of the Cross. Jesus being handed over to Pilate was also the process for fulfilling the death on the Cross that the Lord had foretold.

Therefore, we must not rely on our own resolution like Peter, or on outward deeds like the religious leaders. We must believe with the heart that Jesus completely removed all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. A person who has received the remission of sins by this faith can, even in his weakness, return to the gospel and follow the Lord under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

John 18:33–40—what kind of king does Jesus say He is, and for what does He say He came into this world?

John 18:33–40 is the word that makes clear, through the questioning by Pilate, what kind of king Jesus is and for what purpose He came to this earth. Jesus said that He is the King of the kingdom of God and that He came into the world to testify

of the truth. That truth was revealed as the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus saved sinners with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. The scene at the end, in which the people cry out for the release of the sinner Barabbas instead of Jesus, who had no sin, shows the meaning of salvation, that Jesus is judged in the place of sinners.

1. Pilate asked Jesus, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"*

The Jewish religious leaders accused Jesus of being a man who had tried to become king in opposition to the rule of Rome. That Pilate asked Jesus, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"* was meant to confirm whether Jesus was guilty of political treason.

But Jesus asked in return, *"Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"* Jesus knew exactly the meaning contained in Pilate's question. He asked whether Pilate was asking because he knew Jesus as the true King, or whether he was questioning Him following the words of the accusers.

Jesus was not One who tried to seize the power of Rome and become the political king of Israel. He is the King of the kingdom of God, who created heaven and earth and rules over all life.

2. The kingdom of Jesus is not a kingdom that belongs to this world

Jesus said, *"My kingdom is not of this world."* The kingdom of Jesus is not a kingdom established by the military force and

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political power of the world. It is an eternal kingdom ruled by the truth, the righteousness, and the life of God.

Jesus said that if His kingdom were of this world, His servants would have fought so that He would not be delivered to the Jews. This is also why, when Jesus was arrested, He did not let the disciples fight with force. It was not because He had no strength that the Lord was arrested; He went the way of the Cross of His own will in order to save sinners.

A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit lives in this world, but he is a person who belongs to the kingdom of God. His King is not a powerful man of this world but Jesus Christ, and he lives not according to his own greed and strength but according to the word of God.

3. Jesus is the true King of the kingdom of God

When Pilate asked, *"Are You a king then?"* Jesus answered, *"You say rightly that I am a king."* Jesus did not hide His kingship. He is God, who created all things, and the King of kings, who gives life to people, saves sinners, and will judge all people on the last day.

The kingship of Jesus did not disappear even before the Cross. Though Jesus stood in the judgment hall of Pilate, the One who in reality knew and governed everything was Jesus. Though Pilate sat in the seat of the judge, the true Judge who will one day judge Pilate and all people is Jesus.

Jesus is the King, and at the same time the Savior who serves sinners. In order to remove the sin of His people, He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and He bore that sin and was hung on the

Cross and shed His blood and died. And by rising again from the dead, He gave the remission of sins and eternal life to those who believe.

4. Jesus came to this earth to testify of the truth

Jesus said, *"For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."* Here, the truth is not a mere philosophy or moral teaching. Jesus Himself is the truth, and all the work Jesus accomplished in order to save sinners is the truth.

Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in a human body. He had all the sins of the world transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in our place. By rising again from the dead, He overcame sin and death and became the eternal Savior of those who believe. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus testified of with His word and His work.

Therefore, to believe the truth does not stop at acknowledging Jesus as an excellent teacher or a religious leader. It is to believe that Jesus is God and one's own King and Savior, and to accept into the heart the word that He removed all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection.

5. A person who is of the truth hears the word of Jesus

Jesus said, *"Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."* A person who is of the truth is not a person who alters the word

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of Jesus to suit his own thoughts, but a person who accepts as it is the salvation that Jesus spoke of and accomplished.

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit acknowledges the fact that he is a sinner and cannot wash away his sins by himself. And he believes the word that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and paid the price of that sin on the Cross. A person who has received the remission of sins by this faith receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, becomes a child of God, and becomes one of the people of the kingdom of God.

To be of the truth does not simply mean having a great deal of knowledge about the Bible. It is to know who Jesus is, to believe with the heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished, and to accept the word of the Lord as one's own life.

6. Pilate asked about the truth, but he did not accept Jesus, who is the truth

Pilate asked Jesus, *"What is truth?"* But he did not accept into his heart the word of Jesus, who is the truth and who stood before his eyes. Pilate clearly declared that he had found no fault in Jesus, but he neither protected Jesus to the end nor believed in Him.

Acknowledging the fact that Jesus has no sin and believing in Jesus as one's own Savior are different. Pilate knew the fact that Jesus had no sin, but he did not accept the fact that Jesus is the King of the kingdom of God and the One who would save him from sin.

Even today there are people who acknowledge the historical facts that Jesus was a good man and that He was hung on the

Cross, yet do not accept the gospel that He bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John. To know the truth is not to understand the facts about Jesus only with the head, but to believe with the heart in the salvation He accomplished.

7. The sinner Barabbas was released, and Jesus, who had no sin, was handed over to death

Pilate tried to release Jesus, saying that according to the custom of the Passover he would release one prisoner. But the people cried out for him to release not Jesus but Barabbas. Barabbas was a sinner who had taken part in rebellion and murder, yet he was released, and Jesus, who had no sin at all, was handed over to the Cross.

The scene of Barabbas being released shows the salvation of Jesus, who takes the place of sinners. The one who originally had to receive the punishment of the cross was Barabbas. But Barabbas was released because of Jesus, and Jesus went to the place where Barabbas should have faced death.

Before God, we too are sinners like Barabbas. Committing sin with our hearts and deeds, we had to receive death and judgment, the wages of sin. But Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John and received in our place the punishment of the Cross that we had to receive. The sinner was released, and Jesus, who had no sin, died in his place.

8. A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit serves Jesus as his own King

To believe in Jesus as King is not merely to call Him Lord

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with the lips. It is to accept with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus spoke of, and to make His word the standard by which one judges one's own life.

A person who has this faith does not make the power or the glory of the world his ultimate hope. He believes that he is a person who belongs to the kingdom of God, lives according to the word of truth, and preaches the gospel of the remission of sins to others as well. Just as Jesus came to this earth to testify of the truth, a person who has been saved by believing the truth must also live a life that testifies of the work of salvation of Jesus.

Conclusion

John 18:33–40 testifies that Jesus is the King of the kingdom of God and the truth. The kingdom of Jesus is not a kingdom established by the military force and political power of the world, but the eternal kingdom into which those who have received the remission of sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit enter.

The truth that Jesus testified of is Jesus Himself and the salvation He accomplished. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross in our place, and accomplished perfect salvation by rising again from the dead.

Pilate asked what truth was, but he did not accept Jesus, who is the truth. On the other hand, a person who is of the truth hears the word of Jesus and believes with the heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished. Just as Barabbas was released from death because of Jesus, a sinner who believes in this gospel is saved from all sins and judgment and becomes one of the people of the kingdom of God. ✉

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 18

[Question] 1. What kind of chapter is John chapter 18, and what are its main contents?

John chapter 18 records the events from the arrest of Jesus until He stands in the judgment hall of Pilate, passing through Annas and Caiaphas. The betrayal of Judas Iscariot, the denial of Peter, the questioning by the religious leaders, and the trial before Pilate follow one after another, showing that the death of Jesus on the Cross has drawn near. But the outstanding characteristic of this chapter lies in the fact that Jesus appears not as a victim being helplessly arrested and led away, but as the One who is accomplishing His own work of salvation by Himself according to the will of the Father.

Jesus knew all that would come upon Him. He first asked those who had come to arrest Him whom they were seeking, made Himself known, saying, *"I am He,"* and told them to let the disciples go and to take Him alone. The fact that when Jesus said, *"I am He,"* the detachment of troops and the officers drew back and fell to the ground shows that it was not because He had no strength that He was arrested. Jesus protected the disciples and gave Himself up of His own will.

When Peter cut off the ear of Malchus with a sword, Jesus said, *"Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"* Because Jesus had already borne all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He now had to receive the judgment of that sin on the

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Cross. Therefore, the arrest of Jesus was not a failure suffered unexpectedly, but obedience in willingly accepting the cup the Father had given Him in order to save sinners.

Also, in this chapter the truthfulness of Jesus stands in clear contrast with the weakness and injustice of people. Judas Iscariot sold Jesus, and Peter, who had boasted that he would follow the Lord, denied Him three times. The religious leaders, while not entering the Praetorium so as not to be defiled before the Passover, tried to kill Jesus, who had no sin. Jesus said that since He had taught everything openly in the synagogues and in the temple, if there was any wrong, they should produce the evidence of it. Pilate too, after questioning Him, acknowledged, *"I find no fault in Him at all."*

In the conversation with Pilate, it is revealed what kind of King Jesus is. Jesus said, *"My kingdom is not of this world,"* and made clear that He was not a political king who had come to obtain worldly power. He is the King of the kingdom of God, and the King who came into the world to testify of the truth and to save His people from sin. The truth that Jesus testified of is the truth of salvation by which He bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again from the dead to make sinners the people of God.

At the end, the robber Barabbas is released instead of Jesus, who had no sin. The sinner who had to die was released, and Jesus, who had no sin at all, was handed over to death. This shows that in order to give life to sinners like Barabbas, Jesus bore their sin and punishment in their place. Therefore, while John chapter 18 records the betrayal of people and an unjust trial, it is a chapter that, throughout that whole process, testifies of Jesus Christ, who willingly accepts the cup of suffering in order to save His people—Jesus Christ, the sinless Savior and the King of truth.

[Question] 2. In John 18:1–14, how did Jesus Christ appear before the crowd that came to arrest Him?

Jesus was not helplessly arrested by the crowd; knowing all that He would suffer, He went forward of His own accord. Judas came leading a detachment of troops and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, equipped with weapons, but Jesus did not hide or flee, and first asked, *"Whom are you seeking?"* When they answered that they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus made Himself known, saying, *"I am He."*

That the people who heard that word drew back and fell to the ground shows that Jesus was not a weak person who could not help being overpowered by them. Jesus is God in His very nature, and He had the authority to drive them away and get free. Even so, He did not protect Himself with that authority, but humbled Himself like a servant in order to save sinners. It was not that the people were strong and so arrested Jesus; it was that Jesus gave Himself up to be arrested in order to accomplish the will of salvation.

Even in the presence of those who had come to arrest Him, Jesus protected the disciples. By saying, *"If you seek Me, let these go their way,"* He let the disciples leave safely while He Himself was arrested. This fulfilled the word that He would lose none of those whom the Father had given Him. Even at the most urgent moment, the love of the shepherd, who thought of the disciples before His own safety, is revealed.

Even when Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, Jesus did not permit that fight. He said, *"Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"* The cup Jesus had to receive was to bear the judgment for the sin of mankind and die

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on the Cross. Because Jesus had already borne all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, He had to receive the punishment of those sins and complete salvation by rising again from the dead.

Therefore, the sight of Jesus being bound and led to Annas is not the sight of a defeated criminal. He knew everything and could have escaped if He had wanted to, but He was arrested of His own will for the will of the Father and the salvation of sinners. Christ, holding divine authority and majesty, protected the disciples and gave Himself up to the crowd in the posture of obedience, intending to drink to the end the cup the Father had given Him.

[Question] 3. In John 18:3, of whom was the crowd made up that came with Judas Iscariot to arrest Jesus?

The Gospel of John records the people Judas Iscariot brought as follows.

"Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons" (John 18:3).

They were, first, soldiers belonging to the Roman army. Seeing that verse 12 records that *"the detachment of troops and the captain"* arrested Jesus, even the officer in command of the troops took part in the arrest. Also, officers dispatched from the chief priests and the Pharisees came with them. These were people who had come out to arrest Jesus under the orders of the Jewish religious leaders. Therefore, the crowd Judas led was an arresting party made up of the military force of Rome and the officers of the Jewish religious leaders.

The parallel passages show even more clearly in what manner they came. Matthew records that a great multitude dispatched from the chief priests and the elders of the people came with swords and clubs, and Mark makes clear that it was a crowd sent by the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. In Luke, the chief priests, the captains of the temple, and the elders also appear. The Jewish religious leaders and the military power of Rome moved together in the work of arresting Jesus.

They carried lanterns and torches and were armed with weapons. Although Jesus had taught openly in the temple every day and had never used any violence, they came in the night equipped with swords and clubs, as if catching a dangerous robber. Because Judas Iscariot knew the garden where Jesus often met with His disciples, he became their guide and went ahead of them.

Therefore, the people Judas brought were not ordinary people gathered to follow Jesus. They were officers and Roman soldiers dispatched to arrest Jesus according to the will of the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they were people who, equipped with weapons, intended to bind Jesus like a criminal and drag Him away. Political power and religious power, different in nature from each other, became one in the work of opposing Jesus.

[Question] 4. In John 18:4–7, what did Jesus Christ ask the people who had come to arrest Him, and how was that question repeated?

The question Jesus put to the people who had come to arrest Him was *"Whom are you seeking?"* This question is repeated twice, in verse 4 and verse 7.

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"Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?'" (John 18:4).

Jesus did not ask because He did not know who had come to arrest Him. He knew all that He would suffer, and without hiding or running away, He first went forward before them and asked. When they answered, *"Jesus of Nazareth,"* Jesus clearly made Himself known, saying, *"I am He."* Then those who had come to arrest Jesus drew back and fell to the ground.

This event shows the fact that Jesus was not someone helplessly overpowered by the crowd. Armed soldiers and officers came to arrest Jesus, but they could not even remain standing before His single declaration, *"I am He."* Jesus had the authority to drive them away and get free from that place as He pleased.

Yet when they had fallen to the ground, Jesus did not run away but asked again, *"Whom are you seeking?"* When they answered again, *"Jesus of Nazareth,"* Jesus told them that if they were seeking Him, they should let the disciples go. The second question reveals the fact that Jesus was leading the whole process of the arrest according to His own will, and that while giving Himself up, He protected the disciples to the end.

Therefore, in the question *"Whom are you seeking?"* the boldness, the authority, and the voluntary obedience of Jesus appear together. Because Jesus had borne the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He allowed Himself to be arrested in order to receive the judgment of that sin on the Cross and accomplish salvation. He was not arrested because He could not help being arrested; He let Himself be arrested of His own will in order to save sinners.

[Question] 5. In John 18:10, how did Peter respond to the people who had come to arrest Jesus Christ?

When Peter saw the soldiers and the officers who had come to arrest Jesus, he drew the sword he had and struck the servant of the high priest.

"Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus" (John 18:10).

The other Gospels record only that one of those who were with Jesus wielded a sword, but the Gospel of John makes clear in detail that the man was Simon Peter, that the name of the servant whose ear was cut off was Malchus, and that it was his right ear that was cut off.

In Peter's action there were loyalty and a chivalrous spirit that wanted to protect Jesus. Before the armed men who were trying to take Jesus away, he risked his own life and wielded his sword. Unlike Judas Iscariot, who became the agent of those who were taking Jesus away, Peter stood up against them in order to protect Jesus.

But his loyalty was not an action that came from faith that had grasped the will of Jesus; it was an action that came from the hot blood of the flesh and self-confidence. Jesus did not ask the disciples to fight and rescue Him. Rather, He commanded Peter, *"Put your sword into the sheath,"* and in the parallel passage He said, *"All who take the sword will perish by the sword."* Luke records that Jesus touched the ear of the servant that had been cut off and healed it. Jesus, in turn, healed the man whom Peter had wounded.

Peter did not yet fully know why Jesus had to let Himself be arrested and taken away. Because Jesus had borne all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He had to bear

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that sin and be hung on the Cross and judged. So He said, *"Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"* and made Peter put away his sword.

Therefore, Peter's action came from a zeal to love and protect the Lord, but it was a human method ignorant of the plan of salvation of God. Even if one has zeal for the Lord, if it runs ahead of the word and the will of the Lord, it can wound others. What Peter needed was not to protect Jesus with a sword, but to believe in and follow the will of Jesus, who accomplishes salvation with the baptism He received from John and the Cross.

[Question] 6. In John 18:12, what spiritual meaning is contained in the event of Jesus Christ being arrested and taken away by people?

The word *"Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him" (John 18:12)* is, on the surface, an event in which Jesus was overpowered by armed men and led away like a criminal. But its spiritual meaning lies in the fact that Jesus gave up His own body of His own accord in order to be judged in the place of sinners.

It was not because He had no strength that Jesus was arrested. When He said to those who had come to arrest Him, *"I am He,"* they drew back and fell to the ground. Jesus had the authority to drive them away and get free from that place. Even so, He had them let the disciples go, and He Himself was arrested and bound. Jesus was arrested not because the strength of the people was greater, but because He gave Himself up of His own will in order to accomplish the plan of salvation of the Father.

Jesus said to Peter, *"Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?"* This cup was

the cup of suffering in which He would receive, in the place of mankind, the punishment for the sin of mankind and die on the Cross. Jesus did not avoid this cup, but accepted it in obedience to the will of the Father. Therefore, the arrest of Christ was not a defeat in which He was forcibly dragged toward the Cross, but an act of obedience in which He Himself entered the way of suffering in order to accomplish the will of the Father.

The reason Jesus had to be arrested and taken away was that He had already borne all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John. When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, God passed the sin of all the people of the world on to Jesus. That is why John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* Jesus had to go all the way to the Cross bearing the sin of the world that He had taken upon Himself with the baptism He received from John, and He had to receive in His own body the judgment of death, the price of that sin.

The arrest of Christ is also an event in which the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:6–7).

Jesus was not a criminal bound because of His own sin; He was arrested and taken away as the sacrificial offering that bore the sin of mankind. The sinless Son of God was bound like a criminal in the place of sinners, and through questioning, contempt, and scourging, He gave Himself up to the Cross. That He gave Himself up like a lamb led to the slaughter was because He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

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Hebrews testifies that Jesus said, *"I have come to do Your will, O God,"* and that *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."* The sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament had to be offered again and again continually, but Jesus offered His own body once and for all and accomplished eternal atonement. The arrest of Jesus shows that the way of offering that very body as the sacrificial offering had begun.

Therefore, the arrest of Christ contains the meaning of substitution, obedience, and love. Jesus was bound in our place for our sins, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John; He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross; and He completed salvation by rising again from the dead. Because Christ was arrested and taken away in the place of a sinner, those who believe in Him have come to be saved from sin, judgment, and death.

[Question] 7. In John 18:15–18, how did it come about that Peter denied Jesus Christ for the first time?

When Jesus was arrested and led to the house of the high priest, Simon Peter and another disciple followed behind. Because the other disciple was known to the high priest, he went into the courtyard with Jesus, but Peter at first stood outside at the door. That disciple spoke to the woman who kept the door and brought Peter inside.

That Peter followed as far as the house of the high priest shows that he loved Jesus and could not completely turn away from the Lord, who had been arrested and taken away. Even in a situation where the other disciples had scattered, he followed

as far as that dangerous place in order to see what would become of Jesus. But he could not stand openly beside Jesus; he followed cautiously so that he would not be exposed.

Then the servant girl who kept the door asked Peter, *"You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?"* Peter answered, *"I am not."* This was his first denial. Though he was a disciple of Jesus, before people he denied that he was a disciple of Jesus.

Only a short while before, Peter had boasted that he would lay down his life for Jesus. At the scene of the arrest, he acted so bravely as to wield a sword and cut off the ear of Malchus. But when Jesus was arrested and he himself was pointed out as one of the same company, fear of death and arrest arose in him. Peter, who had wielded a sword at armed soldiers, denied Jesus before the short question of a servant girl who kept the door. This shows that his courage depended more on his own will and the hot blood of the flesh than on faith that relied on the word.

After that, Peter stood among the servants and the officers who had brought Jesus in, and warmed himself at the fire of coals. His body was near the place where Jesus was being questioned, but with his mouth he denied the fact that he was His disciple. This scene shows that Peter was wavering between a heart that loved the Lord and a fear that wanted to protect his own life.

Jesus already knew this weakness of Peter. Even when Peter said that he would lay down his life and follow Him, Jesus had told him in advance that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed. Peter did not know himself, but Jesus knew all of his boasting, his failure, and even his restoration afterward.

That does not mean, however, that by his denial Peter had forsaken Jesus forever. Jesus bore even this sin that Peter would commit with the baptism He received from John, and He was

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judged for it on the Cross. After He rose again, He went to Peter, asked him three times, *"Do you love Me?"* and said, *"Feed My sheep,"* and so raised him up again. Peter's first denial became the starting point at which his self-confidence and human will collapsed, and afterward he came to follow not by relying on his own strength but by relying on the love and grace of the Lord, who saved him though He knew all his weakness.

[Question] 8. In John 18:25–27, in what situations did Peter's second and third denials of Jesus each take place?

Peter was warming himself at the fire together with the people in the courtyard of the house of the high priest. Then, when the people asked, *"You are not also one of His disciples, are you?"* Peter again denied it, saying, *"I am not!"* This is the second denial. If we look at the parallel passage, Peter did not merely say that he was not a disciple, but even swore an oath and said, *"I do not know the Man!"* Peter, who had boasted that he would lay down even his life for Jesus, now repeatedly denied his relationship with Jesus in order to protect his own safety.

The third question was even harder to evade. This time, a servant of the high priest, a relative of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, *"Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"* He was an eyewitness who had seen Peter with his own eyes in the Garden of Gethsemane. Moreover, if the fact that Peter had wielded a sword at Malchus were also exposed, he was in a situation in which he could be arrested not only for being a disciple of Jesus but also for having used violence.

Even before such a clear eyewitness testimony, Peter denied Jesus again. The parallel passages record that the people

recognized from his speech that he was a Galilean, and that Peter finally denied knowing Jesus, cursing and swearing. The fear that began with the first denial grew even worse—to an oath at the second, and to cursing and swearing at the third.

As soon as Peter denied Him the third time, a rooster crowed. This was the word Jesus had spoken, *"The rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times,"* being fulfilled just as it was. Luke records that at that moment Jesus turned and looked at Peter, and that Peter remembered the word of the Lord and went outside and wept bitterly. The crowing of the rooster was the sound that made Peter realize how different his boasting was from his real self.

This event does not mean that Peter had no heart at all that loved Jesus. Even after the other disciples had fled, he followed Jesus and came into the courtyard of the house of the high priest. But when the threat of death came before him, the fact was revealed that he could not follow the Lord to the end by his own will and courage alone. The will and self-confidence with which he had asserted, *"I will lay down my life for Your sake,"* were completely broken through the three denials.

Jesus already knew that Peter would deny Him like this. He also bore Peter's weakness and even the sins he would commit in the future with the baptism He received from John, and He was judged for them on the Cross. Therefore, Peter's denial did not nullify his salvation. The risen Jesus three times asked Peter, who had denied Him three times, *"Do you love Me?"* and entrusted the flock to him again. Through this event, Peter became a person who follows not by relying on his own boasting, but by relying on the grace and love of the Lord, who knew all his weakness and saved him.

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[Question] 9. In John 18:27, what happened right after Peter denied Jesus for the third time?

As soon as Peter denied Jesus for the third time, a rooster crowed. The word *"Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed"* shows that the prediction Jesus had made to Peter in advance was fulfilled just as it was. Peter had boasted, *"I will lay down my life for Your sake,"* but Jesus already knew that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed.

The parallel passages tell us in more detail what happened when the rooster crowed. Luke records that at that moment Jesus turned and looked at Peter, and that Peter remembered the word He had spoken, *"Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."* Peter realized the fact that, contrary to what he had sworn and boasted, he had denied Jesus three times, and he went outside and wept bitterly.

The crowing of the rooster was not simply a signal that dawn was breaking. It was the sound that announced that the word of Jesus had been fulfilled without fail, and that made Peter realize his true self. Peter had thought that he loved the Lord more than the other disciples and could follow Him even to death, but before the threat of death, the fact was revealed that he could not follow the Lord by his own will and resolution alone. His bitter weeping came from the collapse of his self-confidence and a deep realization of his own weakness.

But Jesus, although He knew in advance that Peter would deny Him, did not forsake him. He bore even that sin and weakness of Peter with the baptism He received from John and was judged for them on the Cross. After He rose again, He went to Peter again, asked him three times, *"Do you love Me?"* and entrusted the flock to him. Therefore, the crowing of the rooster was an event that exposed Peter's failure, and at the same time

it was the turning point at which he gave up his own will and came to rely on the grace of the Lord, who knew him fully and yet loved and saved him.

[Question] 10. In John 18:37, how is the fact that Jesus Christ is King revealed?

Pilate asked Jesus, *"Are You a king then?"* Jesus clearly answered, *"You say rightly that I am a king."* But the kingship Jesus spoke of was not a kingship that would overthrow the rule of Rome and establish a political nation of the Jews. Jesus first made clear, *"My kingdom is not of this world."* If His kingdom had been a kingdom belonging to the world, the disciples would have used force and fought so that Jesus would not be arrested.

'Christ' means the Anointed One, and it expresses all the offices of king, high priest, and prophet. Jesus is the King who rules the kingdom of God, the High Priest who bore the sin of mankind and offered Himself as the offering, and the Prophet who teaches the truth of salvation. He is not a king of the world who rules only one nation, but the King of kings, who created and governs the whole universe and holds the authority of life and judgment.

The kingship of Jesus is not separated from the truth. Jesus said, *"For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."* The purpose for which Jesus came to this earth as King lay not in displaying His political authority, but in revealing that He is God and the truth that saves mankind from sin. Therefore, His kingdom is not a kingdom established by falsehood and unrighteousness, but a kingdom made of truth, righteousness, and love.

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Jesus did the work of a king by saving His people from sin. He bore all the sin of mankind in His own body with the baptism He received from John, bore that sin and was judged on the Cross, and rose again from the dead. That He suffered before Pilate and was given up to the Cross was not because He had no strength and was defeated by the power of the world. He gave up His own body of His own accord in order to save sinners and make them His kingdom and His people. Therefore, Jesus is not a king who oppresses the people with power, but the King of love and salvation, who gave His own life to give life to His people.

The people of Jesus the King are those who hear His voice and believe the truth that He testified of. As the word says, *"Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice,"* a person who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of sins and becomes one of the people of God. They are no longer those who belong to sin and the devil, but those who belong to Christ, who is the truth, and they are people who live under His word and His rule.

The kingship of Jesus did not end with the Cross and the resurrection. God entrusted Him with all authority in heaven and on earth and the authority of judgment. In the future, Jesus will come again, judge evil, and complete the plan of God. Revelation testifies of Him as *"KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS,"* and says that the Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive honor and glory and blessing from all creation.

Therefore, Christ the King does not mean a political king who belongs to the world. He is God, who created the whole universe, the Savior who saves His people from sin by the truth, and the King of kings, who rules the kingdom of God and will finally judge the world.

[Question] 11. In John 18:37, for what purpose did Jesus Christ come into this world?

Jesus Christ clearly told Pilate the purpose for which He had come to this earth.

"For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37).

Here, "was born" refers to the incarnation, in which the Son of God was born on this earth in human flesh. Jesus laid aside the glory of heaven and came into the world in a human body in order to bear witness to the truth.

The truth to which Jesus bore witness is not some ideology or a teaching made by man. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life."* The truth is Jesus Himself, and the fact that He is the true God, the Creator, and the Savior who saves sinners. Through His word and the things He did, Jesus revealed how much God the Father loves sinners and by what method He saves them.

To testify of the truth does not mean teaching the truth by word only. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind in His own body with the baptism He received from John. And He bore that sin and was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of sin, and He rose again from the dead. In this way, Jesus proved through His actual work that He is the Savior. That He said on the Cross, *"It is finished!"* is the declaration that He had completely accomplished the work of the truth that saves sinners.

What Jesus testified of is the truth of the righteousness and the love of God. God did not overlook sin without any grounds. Jesus bore all the sin of sinners with the baptism He received from John, and received on the Cross in their place the punishment corresponding to that sin. By this the righteousness

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of God was fulfilled, and the love of God, who gives life to sinners, was also revealed. That Jesus gave His own life and saved sinners is the unchanging truth of salvation.

The purpose for which Jesus came to this earth lay in saving His people from sin by this truth and making them belong to the kingdom of God. As the word says, *"She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins,"* Jesus came to save the people who were under sin and judgment and make them the people of God. He establishes a kingdom made of truth, righteousness, and love, and He becomes the King of that kingdom.

The word *"Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice"* means that those who hear and believe the truth of salvation that Jesus accomplished come to belong to His kingdom. A person who believes that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection obtains the remission of sins and eternal life and becomes one of the people of God.

Therefore, the purpose for which Christ came to this earth was to reveal that He is the truth, to accomplish the truth of salvation with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection and so save sinners from sin, and to make them the people of God who belong to the kingdom of truth.

[Question] 12. In John 18:39, is there a historical and biblical basis for the custom of releasing one prisoner at the Passover?

The custom of releasing one prisoner at the Passover is clearly confirmed within the Gospels. In John 18:39, Pilate said, *"You have a custom that I should release someone to you at the*

Passover." Here, "*custom*" means that it was not something proposed for the first time on this occasion, but a practice that had been carried on from earlier times.

Matthew and Mark also record the same fact. Matthew 27:15 says, *"At the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished,"* and Mark 15:6 also says, *"At the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested."* Therefore, this custom was not an account that appears only once in the Gospel of John, but a custom of that time to which several Gospels testify together.

This is not a Passover rite prescribed in the law of Moses. In the Passover ordinances of the Old Testament there is no command to release a prisoner at each feast. The Bible does not call this a law that God commanded the people of Israel, but explains it as a "*custom*" by which the governor released one prisoner according to the wish of the multitude at the feast. The Bible does not go so far as to make clear who began this custom or when. Therefore, rather than speculating about and explaining its origin, it is accurate to understand it as a practice that was actually being carried out in the time of Jesus.

Pilate tried to use this custom to release Jesus, who had no sin. Because he could find no sin in Jesus, he asked the Jews whether they wanted him to release the King of the Jews. But the multitude demanded that he release not Jesus but Barabbas, who had taken part in rebellion and murder. In the end, Barabbas, who had sin, was released, and Jesus, who had no sin, came to receive the punishment of the Cross.

This event shows the substitution of Jesus in a concrete form. Just as Barabbas, who had to die, was released because of Jesus, people who had to be judged for sin came to be saved because of Jesus. Because Jesus had borne all the sin of mankind with

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the baptism He received from John, He received the punishment of the Cross in the place of sinners. Through the event in which Barabbas was released and Jesus died in his place, the truth of salvation was revealed, that Christ was judged in the place of sinners in order to give them life.

Therefore, releasing a prisoner at the Passover was not a Passover ordinance according to the law of Moses, but it was a custom in the time of Jesus by which the governor released one prisoner at the feast at the request of the people, and Matthew, Mark, and John testify of it together.

[Question] 13. In John 18:39–40, what did Pilate ask the Jews who had gathered, according to the custom of release at the Passover?

After making clear that he had found no fault in Jesus, Pilate tried to release Jesus by using the custom of releasing one prisoner at the Passover. He asked the multitude as follows.

"Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" (John 18:39).

Mark also records this question as *"Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"* In Matthew, the choices appear even more concretely. Pilate asked, *"Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"* In the end, Pilate's question made the multitude choose whom they wanted released—Barabbas, who had sin, or Jesus, who had no sin.

There is meaning also in the fact that Pilate called Jesus *"the King of the Jews."* Pilate, having confirmed that Jesus had not raised any political rebellion or incited the people to resist Rome, could find no sin in Him worthy of death. So, thinking that if he

used the custom of release at the Passover the multitude too would choose Jesus, he tried to release Him.

But the multitude cried out, *"Not this Man, but Barabbas!"* They rejected Jesus, who had no sin, and chose Barabbas, a robber who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder. Thereby Barabbas, who had sin, was released, and Jesus, who had no sin, was handed over to the Cross.

This event shows the salvation in which Jesus was judged in the place of sinners. Just as Barabbas was released because of Jesus, Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and received in their place the punishment of the Cross that sinners had to receive. Therefore, historically Pilate's question was a question asking which of two prisoners should be released, but through its result, the truth of substitution was revealed, in which the sinner is released and Christ dies in his place. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Give thanks for the salvation of God

< John 18:12-40 >

"Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself. The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him, 'I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.' And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, 'Do You

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answer the high priest like that?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?' Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, 'You are not also one of His disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not!' One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, 'Did I not see you in the garden with Him?' Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed. Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this Man?' They answered and said to him, 'If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.' Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,' that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that

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I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all. But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' Then they all cried again, saying, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a robber."

The faith needed in Passion Week

Churches keep the week before Easter every year as Passion Week. No one can be sure that Easter falls exactly on that date, but because there is a day in the year when we remember that our Lord suffered on this earth and rose again from the dead, that week is kept as Passion Week and the following Sunday as Easter Sunday. As we enter this week, I would like us to consider together, on the basis of the word recorded in John chapter 18, why Jesus was nailed to the Cross.

Before Jesus was handed over to the Roman soldiers, He was in the garden of prayer. While He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, just then Judas came, bringing the officers of the chief priests and the Roman soldiers, to seize Jesus. Judas came up before Jesus and kissed Him. It was because that was the sign they had arranged beforehand. *"Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him'" (Matthew 26:48)*. Only when Judas let them know which one was Jesus by kissing Him could the soldiers seize Jesus and take Him away.

In fact, Jesus had done nothing wrong. He came to this earth and preached the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, healed the

sick, and preached the word of heaven to the disciples and to many people. Also, having come to this earth, He received baptism from John and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, and He was the One who would bear that sin, die on the Cross, and rise again. Yet the chief priests and the Pharisees came with their officers and the Roman troops to seize Jesus, who had done nothing wrong. Jesus had no fault, but because they made Him out to be a sinner, He had to undergo being hung on the Cross.

The religious leaders who hated Jesus

Jesus had done nothing wrong before anyone in this world, and He had done nothing wrong before God the Father either. Yet to the high-priestly families of the Jewish nation, Jesus was a great thorn in the side. To the Pharisees, to the scribes, and to those who held power at that time, Jesus was a thorn in the side. This was because the high priests were people who offered the sacrifices and were praised by the people, and the Pharisees were people who were treated in every synagogue as teachers of the people of Israel, but with the appearance of Jesus they could no longer be respected as before. The high priests could not comfort the people of Israel with the word of God, and could not solve the problems of their hearts. The religious leaders called rabbis, too, could not lead the people of Israel to obtain peace of heart.

But with the appearance of Jesus, and by hearing His word, many people obtained peace of heart. They came to know what the kingdom of heaven is; by meeting Jesus they ate bread and solved the hunger of their flesh, some were healed of their diseases, and some were even raised from the dead. Whether in obtaining comfort and strength of heart or in obtaining strength

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of the flesh, in many respects people obtained strength from Jesus. Therefore the high priests of Israel and the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, gradually lost their popularity, and the One who swept the nation of Israel with sensational popularity and appeared to many people as the Savior was Jesus. That is why Jesus was hated not by the common people but by the chief priests and the Pharisees, that is, by the leaders.

The people of Israel also had a desire in their hearts to serve Jesus as their king. When they met Jesus in the fields, they were given bread to eat, and once Jesus gave thanks, the bread and fish did not run out no matter how much they kept distributing it. So how good it must have been! At that time Israel was a colony of Rome. Any people who have had their country taken away know well what the life of a colonized people is like. Even the household bowls and spoons are collected as war supplies, and almost everything is taken away as taxes. Even if they farm, the taxes are greater, so they can hardly even eat. Because it was such a time, the common people had a wish in their hearts that Jesus would really become the king of the nation of Israel. In the hearts of the common people among the people of Israel, Jesus was already king. They were filled with the hope, "How good it would be if He became our king," and whenever they gathered they may well have murmured that they wished Jesus would become their king. That being so, how much the high priests, the Pharisees, and the teachers, who could no longer be respected by the people, must have hated Jesus!

Judas' betrayal and the Garden of Gethsemane

Moreover, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, had never once called Jesus Lord. He always called Him only Teacher. He

thought of Jesus as a teacher who taught him his lessons, a person of no more than that. This Judas went to the chief priests and said that he would show them the place where Jesus often went to pray. The chief priests weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him. Judas sold his own master, and with the officers of the chief priests and the Roman soldiers going ahead of him, he came to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was praying. And he met Jesus and kissed Him. It was because he had arranged the sign beforehand that whomever he kissed was Jesus. In that way they seized Jesus.

At that time Peter, showing a great chivalrous spirit, drew his sword and struck. He struck as if to say that he would not leave alone anyone who laid a hand on Jesus, and the ear of a servant of the high priest named Malchus was cut off and fell. Jesus picked up that ear and put it back on. The ear is a place that bleeds a great deal, and this is something only Jesus can do. Walking on the water and raising the dead are also things only Jesus can do, and no one else can. Who was Jesus, who came as the Savior? He was God the Creator, who made the universe and all things in it and made man. That God was born on this earth for a while as a human being in order to save human beings, and at the age of thirty-three He underwent these things.

When people seized Jesus, He spoke to Peter. *"So Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?'" (John 18:11)*. Our Lord was born on this earth, and when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. Therefore He now had to accomplish salvation by dying on the Cross and rising again. Since He had already had all the sin of all the people of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, how could He not die on the

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Cross? So Jesus rebuked Peter and told him to put his sword into the sheath, and, as the word of another Gospel says, He said, *"All who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52)*. And Jesus was seized by the Roman troops and the officers of the Jews and was bound.

Before Annas and Caiaphas

They took Jesus first to Annas. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. The Jews often married within their own clan. Just as in any country those in power become in-laws with one another and share power among themselves, Annas too had given his daughter to Caiaphas and become his father-in-law, and as the father-in-law of the high priest of that year he held great authority. So they seized Jesus and took Him to Annas. It was to interrogate Him as to whether this Man really had sin or not. Peter and another disciple also followed Jesus.

Annas asked Jesus to tell him what He usually taught and what He taught in the temple. Jesus answered, *"Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said" (John 18:21)*. Then one of the officers who stood by said, *"Do You answer the high priest like that?" (John 18:22)*, and struck Jesus with his hand. Those who know how dreadful a thing this is know it. A creature struck the Creator. It is something that cannot be. There is a saying that a puppy born yesterday does not know to fear the tiger, but this is a matter of no comparison at all, just like a dog slapping the tiger on the cheek. Yet an officer, backed by the authority of the high priest, slapped Jesus on the cheek, as if to say, "When the high priest asks you, you should answer meekly; why do you answer

so impudently?" Jesus said, *"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?" (John 18:23)*. Annas sent Jesus, bound as He was, to Caiaphas the high priest.

When Annas examined Jesus by the law, Jesus had no sin. When Caiaphas interrogated Him, too, he could find no sin in Jesus. So they took Jesus to the Praetorium and handed Him over to Pilate, the Roman governor. It was because by their own law they could not possibly find any sin in Jesus. Pilate was the Roman prefect who governed Judea, Samaria, and Idumea and exercised considerable administrative, military, and judicial authority. of a nation and administered everything.

Jesus, who stood before Pilate without fault

Pilate went out and asked what accusation they brought against this Man. *"They answered and said to him, 'If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.' Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,' that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die" (John 18:30–32)*. Jesus had to be nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and die. The Bible says, *"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Galatians 3:13)*. Because Jesus had all the sin of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, because He really had the sin of all the people of this world transferred to Him, He had to be cursed in the place of everyone in the world. To fulfill this word, our Lord was handed over to Pilate.

Pilate called Jesus and asked Him whether He was the King of the Jews. *"Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for*

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yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice'" (John 18:34–37).

Our Lord said to Pilate that, as he said, He was a king, and that for this cause He was born and for this cause He had come into the world. It means that He came not as a king of this world but as the King of the kingdom of heaven, the King of salvation, the King of the whole universe. Our Lord came to this earth to show that He truly is King, and also, as King, He came to this earth for a while, clothed in human flesh, to save His people from their sins.

Our Lord was nailed to the Cross in order to remove the sin of all mankind, to have all sins transferred to Him and receive the judgment, and so to set us free from sin. It is just like being set free from the life of slavery in which Rome made Israel its colony and worked its people like slaves. We were serving Satan the devil as slaves. Serving as slaves of sin and slaves of death, when the devil threatened us with death we could only tremble for fear of dying and obey the devil's words, and we could not escape from that oppression. Our Lord came to this earth to save us from sin and to save us from the oppression of Satan the devil, and He received baptism from John and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. And by bearing that sin and being nailed to the Cross and dying, He received the judgment, and He

rose again from the dead. It is because only when the Lord bore that sin and died and received the judgment could everyone who believes in Jesus be set free from sin, with no more fear of dying because of sin and nothing to be judged for. Our Lord was hung on the Cross in order to save us from death by giving up His own body to be killed, and to deliver us from the accusation of Satan the devil and from every punishment. On this earth our Lord had no fault whatsoever, whether before the high priest, before Governor Pilate, or before the Pharisees.

Our Lord finally receives the death sentence in Pilate's court. If we keep reading the word, we see that Pilate had a very hard time. He asked why they were handing this Man over to him, and told them that if they had a law they should deal with Him according to their law, but the Jews said that they had no authority to put anyone to death. According to the law, a person who broke the law could be stoned to death. But our Lord had to be cursed for you and me in order to fulfill the word that everyone who hangs on a tree is cursed, because He had had all the sin of all the people of the whole world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. So our Lord came to stand in Pilate's court, and there He received the final death sentence.

Pilate, too, questioned Jesus closely. He asked for what crime they had handed this Man over to him, and what the charge was, but there was no charge. In the conversation between Pilate and Jesus there were many truly unexpected things. When Jesus said that His kingdom was not of this world, Pilate asked whether He then had a kingdom of His own, whether He was a king, and Jesus said, *"You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37)*. Then Pilate asked what truth was.

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It was a story Pilate was hearing for the first time in his life. It was the first time he had met a person who said of Himself that He was a king, and what is more, not the king of this nation but the King of the kingdom of heaven. Pilate must have been greatly shocked at this. Pilate tried to hold a trial, but there was nothing to try. There had to be a charge for him to pass the death sentence, but even though he wanted to hold a trial, he could not.

Then the people of Israel shouted for Him to be killed. At the Passover there was a custom in the nation of Israel of releasing one prisoner. Just as in any country prisoners are specially granted amnesty and released at a great holiday, there was the practice of releasing one prisoner at the feast. Pilate asked whether they wanted him to release the King of the Jews, but they shouted for him to release not this Man but Barabbas. Barabbas was the worst robber in that land at the time. Jesus was not found at fault by anyone—not by Pilate, not by Annas, not by Caiaphas, not by the Pharisees, not by the scribes, not by all the people.

You and I are lacking people in whom faults would be found if we were examined, but Jesus had not the slightest bit of that. He was God and at the same time a human being. Because He was One who had both of these attributes, in His nature there were both the attributes of God and the attributes of a human being. That is why He could walk on the stormy water, and when Lazarus died, He saw his family weeping and, seeing the helpless condition of human beings in the face of death, He groaned and shed tears. He also wept, foreseeing that the nation of Israel would be invaded by Rome and laid waste. Jesus is the One who came to testify of the truth. He came to testify of this truth of salvation, that God loved us human beings and saves sinners, and He was the Lord who came to accomplish real salvation and show it to us clearly before our eyes. Yet Pilate

asked what truth was, and then, saying that he found no fault in Him, asked whether they wanted him to release the King of the Jews, and they shouted again for him to release Barabbas.

In conclusion, why was Jesus nailed to the Cross? It was because He had all the sin of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. Because Jesus, at the age of thirty, received baptism from John and had your sins, the sin of all the people of this world, and the sin of all mankind transferred to Him, in order to give His own body over to the Cross and die and rise again, He did not resist and did not appeal until He went to Pilate's court, but stayed silent, just as the word says, *"As a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7)*. He did not speak until they had seized Him and nailed Him to the Cross and killed Him. Our Lord was nailed to the Cross because He had all your sins and my sins and the sin of all the people of this world transferred to Him through that baptism, and because He wanted to receive the judgment for those sins. And He rose again from the dead.

But the people—that is, the Jews, Governor Pilate, the Pharisees, the chief priests, and all the crowd that opposed Jesus—found a charge by which they could kill Jesus by crucifixion, a punishment given only to the most atrocious criminals. It was that Jesus had called Himself a king. On that charge they were able to nail Jesus to the Cross and kill Him. Pilate tried to release Jesus. It was because the governor who had come from Rome interrogated Him and could not possibly find any sin. But the people of Israel would not accept Jesus and demanded that He be crucified. Pilate made great efforts to release Jesus, against whom there was no charge.

Moreover, if we read the word carefully, Pilate's wife received a testimony about Jesus in a dream and was greatly troubled in her heart, and she sent word to her husband, who was

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sitting on the judgment seat, saying, *"Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him" (Matthew 27:19)*. Even after hearing his wife's words, and even after hearing what Jesus said, Pilate trembled with fear. He tried so hard to release Him, but in the end Jesus was given over to the wooden cross, on which only the most atrocious criminals were hung. The charge was precisely that Jesus had said He was the King of the Jews.

Jesus Christ, the King of the whole universe and the King of kings

Jesus is actually the King of the people of Israel, the King of all the creatures and spiritual beings in the universe, and God the King. Who made these flowers and plants? Who made the animals and made this universe? It is Jesus. Jesus is the King of kings. Yet because of this word, that He had said He was a king, the people of Israel were able to hang Jesus on the Cross. They said that Caesar alone was their king. They said that Caesar, the emperor of Rome, was their king. How could a Gentile be king over the Jews? Even so, colluding with the political powers and flattering them, they gave Jesus up to be nailed to the Cross. Of course, Jesus had to be nailed to the Cross because He had had all the sin of the world transferred to Him, and He gave Himself up to it of His own accord.

In Roman law, the punishment given to the most wicked criminals was precisely the punishment of being nailed to a cross and killed. The nation of Israel had had the law from of old, but at that time it had no authority to put anyone to death. So although it came about this way because Jesus Himself willed it, He had to be nailed to the Cross because He had had the sin of

the world, all your sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. Actually, Jesus had never committed a sin on this earth, nor had He done anything wrong. It was only because He received baptism from John to save you and me from the sin of the world, and had all our sins transferred to Him through that baptism, that He had to be nailed to the Cross and rise again.

At any rate, Pilate, unable to withstand the clamor of the people of Israel shouting fiercely for Him to be crucified, told them to do as they wished and passed the death sentence on Jesus. Pilate said that this had not come about because he wanted it, and saying that he was innocent, he had water brought and washed his hands. But Pilate's heart was tormented all his life. It was because, though he had held many trials, the only one without sin was Jesus. Pilate's conscience was tormented all his life. According to a story handed down, Pilate became sick at heart over this matter, lived always washing his hands, and died miserably. In his conscience Pilate could not possibly pass the death sentence on Jesus, but the people of Israel, demanding that He be crucified, seized on the governor's weak point. *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar" (John 19:12)*. Since, if it were reported to his superiors that the Jews so revered and exalted the Roman emperor while he, the governor, had not gone along with it, his position would immediately be in danger, Pilate gave the sinless Jesus over to the Cross in order to keep his own authority. The charge for the death sentence was that He had said He was the King of the Jews. The king of the Jews under colonial rule was Caesar, so how could Jesus be king, they said.

So they nailed Jesus to the Cross and killed Him. They drove nails into both hands and both feet. They drove nails through His wrists so that He hung on the wood, caught by the bones, and

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they drove nails through His ankles too. The wrists and ankles are places the arteries pass through, so every time the blood from the heart circulated once around the whole body, it poured out through the nail wounds. In that way all the blood in His body passed through the heart and poured out completely. Jesus was nailed to the Cross on the charge of being the King of the Jews, and He died on the Cross. And that charge was written in three languages—Hebrew, Latin, and Greek—and hung above the Cross.

Jesus was truly the King of the whole universe, and truly the King of the Jews. The Jews are the descendants of Abraham and the chosen people. There are many people in this world, but God promised to be the God of the descendants of Abraham, that is, of those who received circumcision. Jesus is the King of those who have received the remission of sins and believed in Jesus and truly become the people of God. Of course He is King to those others too, but to them He is the Judge, and to us who have received the remission of sins He is the true King. To us who believe in our hearts in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and so believe that He has saved us, and who believe in that Jesus who testified of the truth of salvation and completed it, Jesus is truly King. Jesus is God, the Savior, and our King. When we go to the Lord's kingdom in the future, our Lord as King will lead us, His people, and we will enjoy glory together with Him.

On the placard of the Cross it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek that He was the King of the Jews. The Jews were displeased and told Pilate not to write "the King of the Jews" but to write that He called Himself the King of the Jews, but Pilate answered, *"What I have written, I have written" (John 19:22)*. Jesus was truly nailed to the Cross and died. And He rose again. It was not because He had no power that Jesus was nailed. As

the King of kings and the King of the whole universe, because He had all the sins of each one of you transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, He gave Himself up to the Cross and was nailed in order to save the people who believe in Him, to save you and me who believe. So as our true King He became Immanuel. God was with us and saved us.

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Our Lord had all the sin of His people transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, removed it all, received all the judgment on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, and so became our true King. Jesus has become your true King and my King. Because the Lord received baptism from John on account of your sins and mine and had all our sins transferred to Him, He was nailed to the Cross, died for us, and rose again. Just as the word says, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, because Jesus received baptism from John and had all your sins and transgressions and mine transferred to Him, our Lord was nailed to the Cross. To save you and me from the judgment for sin and from death, He was nailed and hung on the Cross, and He rose again.

"It is finished!"

As our Lord died on the Cross, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. Also, when He was carrying the cross up to Golgotha, He said to those who were weeping, *"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28)*. Although our Lord died on the Cross, it is not something for us to weep bitterly over. The Lord said, *"A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as*

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she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world" (John 16:21). Before our Lord had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and was nailed to the Cross, He was greatly distressed and wept as He looked at sinful mankind. But He was nailed to the Cross to deliver us completely from sin, from judgment, and from death, and He did so to save us. And so He finished it all.

We must know, and must believe, that the Lord was nailed for your sake, to save you and me from sin, to deliver us from the punishment for sin, to deliver you and me from that death with which Satan the devil was oppressing us, and to give us new life.

What happened after our Lord was nailed to the Cross? *"Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:32–34)*. The prophetic books of the Old Testament said that His bones would not be broken. Because Jesus died quickly, when the soldiers came to confirm that He was dead, the other two were still alive. So the Roman soldiers broke the leg bones of the remaining two and killed them. But when they looked at Jesus, He was already dead. When a Roman soldier pierced His side with a long spear to make sure, water and blood came out. When a person dies, the water and the blood separate and gather toward the side, and seeing that water and blood came out when He was pierced, they did not break Jesus' bones.

Where did it come from, that our Lord saved us and we became the people of God? Where did the woman come from? She came from Adam's rib. Did God make the woman again out

of dust? God made Adam out of dust, but He did not make Eve out of dust. He took out one of Adam's ribs, closed up the flesh, and made her. What does this tell us? It tells us that those who have received the remission of sins before God were made, and were saved, within the heart of God, through the water and the blood of Jesus Christ, that is, through the salvation of the water and the blood. So it tells us that they became the people of God, that the saved saints gathered and the Church of God was formed, and that they became the bride of Jesus Christ.

By what did we become the children of God? Jesus Christ was born on this earth, received baptism from John and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, and so saved us. So He gave to those who believe the authority to become the children of God, made us call Him Abba, Father, by the Spirit who is holy, and saved us completely from sin. Our God determined from before the foundation of the world to give us life through the water and the blood of Jesus Christ, and when the time came, when we had become slaves through Satan the devil, He sent Jesus Christ, and Jesus received baptism from John, died on the Cross for us, and rose again, and so saved us completely from sin, from death, from judgment, and from destruction.

So we have been saved by faith. We believe that the Lord has saved us, that our Lord has saved us completely by the water and the blood, that is, by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We believe that our God sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth and made us completely the children of God by the water and the blood. We believe that this is the truth. Our becoming the children of God was in the heart of God, and that plan of God was fulfilled in this salvation of the water and the blood of Jesus Christ. So we have become the children of God. In this Passion Week, Jesus suffered, but we have become the children of God

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through Jesus being born on this earth, receiving baptism from John, suffering and dying for us on the Cross, and rising again. Just as a woman, when she gives birth to a baby, suffers great pain but forgets the pain of childbirth as she looks at the loveliness of the baby after giving birth, He Himself went through that pain of childbirth, but you and I, for our part, have instead been completely delivered from sin and saved through Jesus Christ coming to this earth, receiving baptism from John, being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood for us, and rising again. We have been delivered from destruction, from judgment, from death, and from the curse, and have obtained eternal life. The Lord truly rejoices over us, who have received the remission of sins and been saved.

Give thanks for the righteous and perfect salvation of God

Let us not forget this salvation—that our Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John, died for us on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, and so saved you and me. Let us give thanks for this salvation. Instead of displaying human righteousness by grieving, weeping, frowning, and fasting for a day in the name of helping the poor, give thanks before God that God has saved us through Jesus Christ. Give glory to God by faith and give thanks by faith. Give thanks by faith instead, and to your family members who do not yet know the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, preach this salvation of God and this love of God, telling them that God has saved them, that Jesus Christ has saved them. God is more pleased with this.

If, during Passion Week, someone fasts for a day and, with the small amount of money that meal would have cost, buys rice

and instant noodles and takes them to an orphanage, and says that just as Jesus suffered for him, he too has taken part in the sufferings of Jesus, that nullifies the suffering of Jesus, who had all the sin of the world transferred to Him through His baptism and died for us on the Cross. It puts it to shame. Would we compare the suffering of Jesus with our skipping a meal? How can anyone try to weigh that as something equal to the suffering of Jesus? Even if we were nailed to a cross and died, even if we were persecuted for believing in Jesus, caught by others, torn limb from limb, and died, would the death of Jesus and our death be the same? Could our suffering and the suffering of Jesus be the same? It is something that makes no sense. Yet people are doing this thing that makes no sense.

Even now people say that they take part in Passion Week by fasting for a day. Let us not think so cheaply of the fact that Jesus died for you and for me, that He had the sin of the world and our sins all transferred to Him, gave His body over to the Cross, was nailed, shed all the blood in His heart, and died for us. *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5)*. The Cross is the result of sin. Because the wages of sin is death, and because Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sin of the world transferred to Him, He had to be nailed to the Cross, and then He rose again. Through this we are released from sin, and we are healed and saved from all our transgressions and sins, from all the sins of going against God, and from all the sins committed in this world.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). What is the iniquity of us all? It is the sin of all the people of the whole world. It is my sins of a lifetime

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and your sins of a lifetime, the sins of your descendants and the sins of your ancestors. God created the heavens and the earth, and Adam and Eve, the first ancestors of mankind, came forth; from the sin of that Adam and Eve to the sin of every person until the day this earth ends, our Lord had all of it transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. By having all those sins transferred to Him and being nailed to the Cross, He healed us. He saved us completely, so that we would never again suffer because of sin or shed tears from our eyes. Therefore you and I have been saved by faith. Do you believe?

Do not grieve over the death of Jesus. Our Lord told the disciples that He would be seized by the elders and the chief priests, be nailed to the Cross and die, and rise again on the third day. Then Peter stepped forward and said that such a thing would never happen, and that if anyone laid a hand on the Lord he would protect Him at the risk of his own life. At that time Jesus said, *"Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matthew 16:23)*. What He meant was this: I must surely die on the Cross. Since I have had all the sin of the world transferred to Me for your sake, I must be nailed for your sake, and unless I am nailed, you cannot be completely set free from sin. Because the wages of sin is death, although I have received baptism from John and had all your sins transferred to Me, so that all those sins are on My body, only when I give My body over to the Cross and die and then rise again can you be set free from sin, become the children of God by faith, and come to the kingdom of heaven. That is what our Lord said.

We must weep for those who do not know the truth

When Jesus was going up the hill of Golgotha carrying the cross, a great multitude wept, pitying Jesus. Our Lord turned and said, *"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28)*. What He meant was this: I have had all the sin of the world transferred to Me through My baptism, and I am carrying the cross in your place and will be nailed and save you; but if you do not believe in Me, this suffering and this contempt are nothing, and you will go to eternal hell. So weep for your descendants.

We really must weep not for Jesus but for our descendants. Is there anyone in your family who has not yet received the remission of sins? Is there anyone whose soul has not been saved? We must weep for such people. We must know how much Jesus loved you. Jesus loved me and loved you. In this world, in this universe, in all of eternity, there is no love greater or more precious than this love with which Jesus loved us. Love is stronger than death. Our Lord, because He loved us, in order to remove our sins and deliver us from death, received baptism from John in our place, died on the Cross in our place, and rose again, and so saved us completely into the kingdom of the Son of His love. Our Lord saved us by the water and the blood. With that love stronger than death He saved you and me.

Why we can give thanks and praise all the more during Passion Week

Frowning because you are hungry during Passion Week is all right, but do not frown thinking of how much Jesus must have hurt. That is mocking Jesus. Give thanks. Give praise. Just as the

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word says that He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, because of you, because of me, because of your transgressions and sins, because of my transgressions and sins, because of all the sins we commit until we die, Jesus received baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross and died in your place, in my place, in the place of all who believe in Jesus in this world, and rose again, and so saved us. We believe this.

I hope you will believe that He was wounded for our transgressions, that He was bruised for our iniquities, that God the Father made Jesus bear the iniquity of us all through the baptism He received from John, and that He was nailed to the Cross in order to receive the punishment for our sins. God is pleased with those who believe so. Believing so is what keeps the death of Jesus from being in vain. What makes the death of Jesus in vain is human beings trying to do something by living good lives. Saying that since Jesus died for us, we too should fast all day and help the poor is what makes the death of Jesus in vain. Does anyone die from fasting for a whole day? What does that amount to? Our sacrifice and the sacrifice of Jesus cannot be compared.

We believe. We believe that our Lord received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again in order to save us. So there is nothing to do but believe that He has saved you, that He has saved me. The word says, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*. Truly it is by faith that we give thanks and give glory before God, and it is by faith that we obtain freedom and peace of heart and live. By faith we give true thanks. We give thanks that Jesus Christ has saved us. We believe that through His being born, receiving baptism from John, being pierced, dying on the Cross, and rising again from the dead, we have been saved by God. And we believe that the salvation we have received by faith is never in vain. We give thanks before God. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

It is finished!

< John 18:12-40 >

"Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, 'You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?' He said, 'I am not.' Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself. The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him, 'I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.' And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, 'Do You answer the high priest like that?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do

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you strike Me?' Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, 'You are not also one of His disciples, are you?' He denied it and said, 'I am not!' One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, 'Did I not see you in the garden with Him?' Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed. Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this Man?' They answered and said to him, 'If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.' Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,' that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?'

And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all. But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?' Then they all cried again, saying, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a robber."

Let us consider the work the Lord has finished

"It is finished!" (John 19:30). I am reminded once again of how comforting, good, and blessed this word is. When Jesus spoke this word, He meant this: our Lord had created us on this earth, but when we had fallen to Satan the devil and, serving as slaves of sin, could only be destroyed, the Lord had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and now, dying on the Cross, He had completed everything and there was nothing more to do. And He rose again from the dead. It gives me the feeling that our Lord must have felt truly good, having finished the work. Although He died on the Cross, He said that it is finished, and so it is a truly good word.

All these things that we have read from John chapter 18 are the things the Lord did on this earth in order to finish all this: to remove our sins, to receive the judgment for our sins for us, to save us from all sin and destruction, and also to take us to the kingdom of God, make us the children of God, and have us live together with Him forever. Taking this word, in which the Lord said that it is finished, let us think together about the work the Lord did.

Looking at this word, we see that while Jesus was praying in a small garden, the Roman soldiers, the officers of the religious leaders, and Judas, who had been a disciple of Jesus, came with

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torches to seize Jesus. When they asked who Jesus of Nazareth was, Jesus said, *"I am He" (John 18:5)*, and let Himself be seized without resistance. At this time the disciple Peter, seeing his master being taken away, struck and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant with his sword. It seems that he did not strike in order to cut off the ear; probably he struck down to kill, but the man dodged, and so his ear was cut off. Had it gone a little wrong, the man's head would have been split. Here we can see Peter's temperament. But now, taking as our standard not Peter but this word in which Jesus said that it is finished, I would like to consider the things the Lord did.

Who seized Jesus and handed Him over?

"Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year" (John 18:12–13). This was the third year since Jesus had received baptism from John at the Jordan River. Because Jesus received baptism from John at the age of thirty and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, and died on the Cross and rose again at the age of thirty-three, this was something that happened when He was thirty-three.

Who came to seize Jesus? The Roman troops and the captain, and the officers of the Jews, Jesus' own people, came to seize Him with Jesus' disciple Judas leading the way. And they seized Him, bound Him, and took Him to a man named Annas. Our Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John, and had the sin of every person of mankind, including you and me, transferred to Him without leaving out a single person. Now He

had to bear that sin of the world, go to the Cross, die, and rise again, and who was used in this? It was the captain, the officers of the Jews, Annas, the disciple Judas, and many among the people of Israel. Jesus was taken away by them, and they were used in fulfilling the will of God.

It would have been simple if Jesus had been seized by the Roman soldiers, taken straight to the Roman governor Pilate, and nailed to the Cross. People had greatly exalted Jesus as the King of the Jews, and if there had been a national vote, Jesus could have become the king of the nation of Israel. It was because many among the ordinary common people followed Jesus. But there were also many people who did not. So the proper order would have been for the Roman soldiers to seize Jesus, take Him straight to Pilate, try Him for treason against the state, charge Him with a crime, and pass the death sentence; but the word shows us that they did not do so, and first took Him to Annas.

What does it tell us that Jesus was first taken to Annas? It tells us that Jesus removed all the sin of mankind and, dying on the Cross, said that it is finished, and saved us fully from all sins, and yet those who had that Jesus nailed to the Cross, who persecuted Him and killed Him, were, more than the Roman soldiers, the religious people among the Jewish nation. That is, they were the leaders of the people who believed only the word of God in the Old Testament, did not believe in Jesus as the Son of God, and were only waiting for the word that God would send the Messiah in the future. By whom was Jesus hated, so that He ended up leaving this earth? It tells us that He suffered because He was hated by religious people, especially by those among His own people who claimed to believe in God, and that in the end He was killed by them. In fact, it was not the whole of the Jews who tried to kill Jesus; it was especially those among the Jewish

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nation who believed in Judaism who killed Jesus.

What did Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, usually say? He was the one who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. In his eyes Jesus was always a thorn. He always had the thought that Jesus must be killed. Every time Jesus healed the sick and spoke the word of truth, he gnashed his teeth on the sidelines and thought that someday he must seize that man and kill him. He thought that for this nation and this people to be at ease, Jesus had to be killed. It was because Israel at that time was a vassal state of Rome. If the popularity of this Man Jesus kept rising, the result would be like the people of a vassal state rising in rebellion to gain their freedom, so Jesus, who would become the ringleader of that rebellion, had to be seized and killed. He was a man who thought that if all the people came to follow Jesus, they would be hated by Caesar, the Roman emperor, and be killed, so it would be better to hand that man over to the Roman soldiers to be killed; then his nation could live well and at ease as a vassal state of Rome, and could live well serving Caesar as king.

Before the high priest and Pilate

So Jesus was first taken to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high priest. Annas, as if he had some great authority of his own, had Jesus brought to him, slandered and despised Him, and then handed Him over to the high priest, his son-in-law. When the high priest asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine, Jesus said, *"I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed*

they know what I said" (John 18:20–21). When he told Him to say what He usually taught, Jesus said that He did not work in hiding but had always spoken openly and clearly in the synagogues where they gathered, so why did he ask Him; he should ask those who had heard from Him.

When Jesus, without being cowed before the high priest, said what He had to say, the officers of the high priest struck Jesus on the cheek. One of the officers struck Jesus with his hand, saying, *"Do You answer the high priest like that?" (John 18:22)*. Jesus was struck like that by those officers. At that time Jesus said, *"If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?" (John 18:23)*. Annas sent Jesus, bound as He was, to Caiaphas the high priest. And Jesus was taken to the Praetorium at dawn. Caiaphas interrogated Jesus, but in the end he could get nothing. So they took Him to Pilate.

"Pilate then went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this Man?' They answered and said to him, 'If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.' Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death'" (John 18:29–31). When Pilate asked what accusation they brought against this Man, they answered that if this Man had not done something very evil, they would not have handed Him over to him. Pilate, the governor who had come from Rome, was, to put it simply, the king of that land. When Pilate told them to judge Him according to their own law, the Jews said that they had no authority to put anyone to death. These Jews had already determined to take Jesus to Governor Pilate, frame Him with a crime, and kill Him. By their religious law they could not find a charge that would justify killing Jesus, and so they could not kill Him; therefore they tried to kill Jesus by taking Him to Pilate, who served Caesar as

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emperor, with the aim of pressing the case that this Man had said He was the King of the Jews, and that if he let this Man live, he was no loyal subject of the Emperor Caesar.

In the Praetorium Pilate asked Jesus whether He was the King of the Jews. Jesus asked whether he was saying this of himself, or whether others had told him this about Him. This was because if the charge to be laid on Jesus was that He had said He was the King of the Jews, He could be put to death. At that time Israel was a nation already swallowed up by Rome, a Jewish nation in name only but in fact a Roman state. Since there could not be two kings in one nation, if Jesus said He was the King of the Jews, He would be put to death. That Pilate asked this means that there had already been a conspiracy beforehand. They had fixed the charge—that Jesus had called Himself the King of the Jews and had led great crowds around, so this point had to be pressed—and had accused Him.

Pilate asked again. *"Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here'" (John 18:35–36).* Jesus was saying that although He lived in this country, He was not of this country. Pilate was talking about a nation, and when Jesus said that His kingdom was not here, he thought it strange and asked again. *"Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?'" (John 18:37–38).*

The King who came to testify of the truth

What did Jesus mean when He said that for this cause He was born and for this cause He had come into the world, and that He had come to testify of the truth? It means that our Lord came to this earth to save sinners from sin. Our Lord is indeed the true Master of salvation and the Lord of the Sabbath. He was saying that He had come to this earth to testify of the work by which God the Father sent Jesus to this earth and saved us from all sins—to save us for certain and to testify of it clearly. Then Pilate asked what truth was. Could Pilate have known what truth was? At any rate, Pilate interrogated Jesus on a few points and judged that, although this Man said some rather strange things, He was neither an agitator who rebelled against the Emperor Caesar or stirred up the people of this nation to oppose the Romans, nor a political offender. So he went out and told the Jews that he found no fault in Him. However much he interrogated Him, His saying that He was the King of the Jews was not an attempt to reign as king in this nation but meant that He was King within the world of faith and truth, and He had come for that work and was testifying of that work, not trying to reign as king in the visible world of the flesh; so Pilate ruled that He was not a rebel.

So Pilate, saying that he had found no fault, asked whether, since there was the custom of releasing one person at the Passover, they wanted him to release the King of the Jews. Pilate truly wanted to release Jesus. It was because, however much he questioned Him, he could find no fault at all. In fact, Jesus had neither tried to reign as king on this earth, nor tried to stir up the people so that He might enjoy wealth and glory. So Pilate thought it had worked out well. As it happened, the feast of the Passover had come round, and since there was the custom of

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always releasing one person at the Passover, he proposed to release this Jesus, and asked whether they wanted him to release this Jesus, whom they had accused of being the King of the Jews. *"Then they all cried again, saying, 'Not this Man, but Barabbas!' Now Barabbas was a robber" (John 18:40)*. This means that the one they hated more than Barabbas, a robber, a murderer, and a vicious criminal, was Jesus. It means that in the very nation where Jesus was born, the people who claimed to believe in God hated Jesus even more than they hated Barabbas, who had committed crimes deserving execution. So Pilate had no choice but to release Barabbas and pass the death sentence on Jesus.

So Jesus was nailed to the Cross. They drove nails into both hands and both feet, and above His head they attached the charge; they attached the charge that He was the King of the Jews, and nailed Jesus to the Cross and killed Him. The Jews were displeased and asked Pilate to take down that placard on which "the King of the Jews" was written, but Pilate said, *"What I have written, I have written" (John 19:22)*. It means that because this Man had said He was the King of the Jews, the King of the Jews was dying here on the Cross.

In fact, Jesus is King to the people of God who have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the King of the kingdom of heaven and, of course, King on this earth as well, but He did not try to reign as king in this world; He came to this earth to build the kingdom of God and to live with us in the kingdom of God, and, as King, to deliver His people from their sins. He was such a King. What can we see in this battle between Annas, Caiaphas, and the officers of the Jews on the one hand and Jesus on the other? It is that although Jesus was clearly born within the nation of Israel and grew up there, He was not a man of this earth like those religious people. We can know that Jesus clearly had a kingdom of His own and a people

of His own, that He was the King of His own kingdom, and that He was the One who came to this earth as King to save His people from their sins and build the kingdom of God.

Our Lord lived on this earth, but He was not a man of this earth, nor was He a king of this earth. He was the King of the kingdom of heaven, and a King for the purpose of saving us. But Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and the Jewish people were the people of the kingdoms of this earth. Jesus was the King of the kingdom of God and the Savior who came to save His people from their sins. So it means that He was not of the same race, the same people, as they were.

The word of the Lord that I long for and admire

As Jesus died on the Cross, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. I am truly thankful for this word of our Lord, that it is finished, and it is a great relief to my heart. I envy Jesus. It is that He must be so much at ease, having finished it all. Now He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and since all that remains is to judge people according to whether they believed or did not believe, whether they were born again or not born again, He must be so much at ease. But we still have a great deal to do. All the words of the Bible are blessed words, but the words I very much long for and admire are the word that our Lord came to this earth to save His people from sin, the word that He received baptism from John and fulfilled all righteousness, the word that He died on the Cross and rose again, having saved us, the prophetic word about the Lord who is coming again—every word that God has spoken. But if I were told to pick one among them, this word, that it is finished, is the one I envy most.

It means that our Lord came to this earth and finished all the

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work of saving us, saving mankind, from sin. Now He has entrusted that work to the disciples and has sent the Holy Spirit to this earth to do the work, so He has finished all that He Himself was to do. Until He finished all the things He wanted to do when He came to this earth, our Lord received much hatred from religious people, from His own people, and also from the people of the kingdom of Satan. But even though it was truly hard and difficult, at any rate He finished it all.

Distinguish the spiritual people

We really must think about this. Although we live on this earth, we must discern in these last days whether, among all the people living on this earth—our relatives, those who believe in Jesus, and those who do not—we are the same people as they are, or a separate people. There are many brothers and sisters who have a very hard time because this part is not clear to them: whether everyone who is a brother or sister in the flesh is one of my people.

Even born-again people are like this. Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, went out into the world to look around, fell into the world, and was violated by the son of the chief of that land, and then, her heart drawn to him, she wanted to live with him. In the midst of this, a terrible thing happened: Jacob's sons, in order to kill the men of Shechem, lied that they would give them their sister if they were all circumcised, and when the men had been circumcised and were in pain, they went and stabbed them all to death with the sword, and a great uproar arose in the house of Jacob. Because Dinah loved the world, and went out without distinguishing her own people from the Gentile people, and suffered such a thing, the clan of Jacob went through such

turmoil, and later suffered the terrible experience of suddenly having to flee for fear that all the surrounding peoples would attack the house of Jacob.

Likewise, if there are still saints and servants in whose hearts there is no distinction between those who are my people and those who are not, that distinction must be made. If there is no distinction, we must think once about by whom our Lord, when He came to this earth before saying that it is finished, was actually persecuted, and by whom He was killed and despised. In the flesh it is so: if they are human, they are all the same human beings; if they are relatives, they are all the same relatives; if they are of the same blood, they are all the same people; and if they are of the same nation, they are all the same countrymen. But spiritually, just as our Lord said, *"Now My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36),* and said that if His kingdom were of this world His servants would have fought so that He would not have been brought in as a captive; just as He said that He was the King of His own kingdom and that He suffered hardship, contempt, and hatred in order to testify of the truth; and just as He said, *"Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice" (John 18:37),* we are a people clearly set apart in this way. We are a holy people like the Levites, a people completely set apart like the Nazirites of the Old Testament.

We must know that we are a people set apart. We must know that although we live on this earth, we are a people set apart who are not like the people of this world, that we are the people of the kingdom of God, and that our King is the King of the kingdom of God. Jesus was despised by the religious people of this world, by Annas, by the high priest, and by their officers; He was slapped on the cheek, spat upon, and struck with their hands. And He was taken away by the Roman soldiers, by the people who had power in this world, and a crown of thorns was

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pressed down on His head so that blood flowed; He was stripped of His clothes, clothed in a purple robe, and mocked with the words, “King of the Jews!”; He was beaten and spat upon, and scourged until blood flowed over His whole body. We must think about from whom Jesus suffered such humiliation.

If we, too, suffer such things while living on this earth, from whom would we suffer humiliation? It means that we would suffer such humiliation from people who are not the people of the kingdom of God. Those who did these things were the people of the king of this world. The people of the king of this world did these things to Jesus, and if born-again people live without even knowing who their own people are, thinking that the people of this world are their people and the people of God are also their people, then someday, when our Lord comes soon, you and I too will suffer the same humiliation Jesus suffered, at the hands of the people living on this earth. Jesus received baptism from John in order to save us from all sins, and in order to receive all the judgment for our sins, He voluntarily obeyed the will of the Father, suffered the pain of the Cross like this, and rose again.

Jesus was hung on the Cross in order to say that it is finished. It was because He had already received baptism from John and had all the sin of the world transferred to Him, because He had had all our sins transferred to Him and washed them away clean, and because your sins and mine had passed on to His body, that this work of God saving His people could be completely finished only when He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, breathed His last, and His body was killed. So He went through that and finished it all. He completed it all, breathed His last on the Cross, entered the tomb, rose again on the third day, testified for forty days, ascended, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Those who are born again are the people of God

We must think about from whom Jesus suffered when He came to this earth and accomplished His will. This present age is the age of the unification of mankind. The religious leaders of the world choose representatives from each nation and each religion, gather in one place, and hold religious councils, and what do they do there? They lay down the laws of religion. They hold such councils in order to lay down the law that all races should gather and respect one another's beliefs, and never touch what belongs to others, and to carry it out according to that law from now on—in order to bring it about that, although all religions are different, all mankind is one people and is one. Among the Christian leaders who go there as representatives, there are some who say that there is salvation in all the other religions too. I will not say everything now about who will persecute you and me, but we must know it.

Until Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, rose again, saved you and me and all mankind from all sins, and said that it is finished, who was it that caused Jesus to suffer in that work of salvation? It was the leaders of the Jewish religion, and the religious people who believed in Judaism. And it was the Roman ruler who held the power of the world.

We give thanks for this word in which Jesus said that it is finished. The Lord saved us completely, and now, resting at ease, He has sent the Holy Spirit and is working together with us and accomplishing His will. But one thing we must clearly remember is that those who persecuted Jesus were the people of the world. We do not know whether it will be your family or who it will be. But are there not some among you and me right now who regard the people who are in the world as if they were

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their own family? If we keep in mind that Jesus suffered from the religious people of the world and from the people of the world, could we do that? It is painful to the heart, but if a person is born again, he is one of the people of God, and if he is not born again, he is not one of the people of God. Then whose people is he? He is one of the people of this earth. We must make this clear.

Our faith and our goal must be clear, but why does that not go well? Why is it that even though I try hard to live a life of faith, it does not go well? It is because this is not clear. It is because we are not good at discerning whether this person is one of my people or one of the people of this earth—not only discerning it but also clearly showing it in our actions. You and I are now so intimate, so close, and get along so well with all the people of the world, but if you knew that those people would do to you and me on the last day what they did to Jesus, would you still do so now? Would we not, in order not to be judged by them and not to be persecuted by them—and rather, because we love them and care for them—preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them, and join our strength together in the work of preaching the gospel? We would do so. But because we do not really know who will persecute us, we just say that everyone is fine. We ought to live in this world thinking about this once.

The world is wide and there is much to do, but the world even now tells people to just go ahead and do anything. It is humanism. In the Middle Ages, when religion put forward theocentrism and tormented people with religious oppression, the humanist spirit of the Renaissance expanded, and there was a movement to raise the standing of man, asking how people could live happily and well. That movement was very good, but it became too humanistic, and there comes a world in which human beings band together and oppose God, reject this truth that God has

removed all their sins, ask what truth is and push through even what is not right by majority vote, and drive even those without sin to death as if in a witch hunt, treating them as wrong. Should we not draw a clear line in this matter and live clearly, with clear faith and a clear spirit? You and I must live that way.

We must clearly know that if a person does not receive the remission of sins, then, to put it rather strongly, he may seize me and kill me on the last day. It would be all right if it were someone who does not know me, but if a person who is now on friendly and familiar terms with me were to do that in the future, how betrayed I would feel! The Lord said of the last day, *"You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death" (Luke 21:16)*. I really do not want it to turn out that way. If I suffered such a thing at the hands of someone I know well, I would feel a tremendous sense of human betrayal. So from now on I simply think that a person who is not born again is a person who will seize me and kill me on the last day. You, too, must think that way. The people connected with you are all on your side and get along well with you, but when the last day comes and Satan the devil completely takes hold of this earth and the time comes when the second coming of Jesus Christ is imminent, those people who get along so well with you will hand you over to be seized and killed. If so, we must now have a clear line, have the consciousness and faith of a chosen people set apart, clearly know that this person is one of my people and that person is not, preach the gospel to those who are not my people so that they may truly obtain salvation, and always care for my people even if they are not my flesh and blood. And those who have become the people of God must live with faith as befits the people of the kingdom of God. We must understand the people of God and live that way. Will it do to be neither one thing nor the other?

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Looking toward the day when we, too, will say, *"It is finished!"…*

As Jesus died on the Cross, He said that it is finished. *"They filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:29–30)*. How relieved our Lord must have felt! All that time He had been slapped on the cheek, assaulted, and hated. He was hated by those among His own people who claimed to believe in God, despised by the creatures He Himself had made, and the people who had the faith of waiting for the Messiah instead opposed and tormented Jesus, who is God; yet He bore and endured all that humiliation, and as He was nailed to the Cross and died He said that it is finished, so how relieved He must have felt! Even these days this word, that it is finished, keeps going around in my head. It is the thought of when I, and when our saints, will be able to say that it is finished. Our Lord has already finished it all and gone, but we have no idea how much we still have to do.

The work we do is not like that. How good it would be if, as we finish some work, we could say that this is the end of it; but after passing over something thinking it seems more or less done, when we look at it again later, something turns up to be fixed. What we pass over with satisfaction, thinking that it is good enough as we finish the work, must without fail be corrected when we look at it again later. What we pass over because it was hard, saying that it is fine and well done, must without fail be looked at again later. That is why the word in which Jesus said that it is finished is admirable and truly enviable. A day will come when I too, and you too, will someday say that word our Lord spoke. I hope we will live with wisdom, thinking about

from whom our Lord suffered hardship and hatred until He said that it is finished. I hope we have true wisdom. Even if it is somewhat difficult and hard, only then can we preach the gospel with faith in these last days, can we not?

We ought to place our expectation in God. We ought to expect that if we properly carry out the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God will work and supply what is needed, and the gospel will be spread throughout the whole world thousands and tens of thousands of times faster than now. We work with such expectation, but this present age is an age of confusion. Everything is tangled and snarled. Just as the earth was without form in the beginning, confusion has come to people's hearts, and in these last days confusion has come again. Now even born-again people are confused.

Let us not forget what those religious people who persecuted Jesus did. Let us learn a lesson from it, know well what the kingdom of God is and what my kingdom and your kingdom are, and live with clear faith, loving and guiding one another as the people of God. Let us pray for one another, hold one another up, and help one another, but let us not, as the people of God, join hands with those who are not the people of God and try to live well among them. God will work in a precious way through us. Let us live that way, with expectation and faith. The nearer we come to this end, the more we should pull ourselves together and live well for the Lord. I hope you will live enduring just a little more for the Lord. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord came to this earth to testify of the truth

< John 18:28-37 >

"Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this Man?' They answered and said to him, 'If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.' Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,' that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the

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truth hears My voice.'"

Jesus, who stood in Pilate's court

As we enter Passion Week, before Easter Sunday, I would like to share the word concerning the sufferings of Jesus. Before Jesus went to Pilate's court, He was taken to the court of Caiaphas and then handed over to Pilate. The Jews accused Jesus and handed Him over. They handed Jesus over to Pilate's court on these two charges: that this Man, calling Himself the King of the Jews, was playing the role of a leader resisting Rome, and that He was disturbing this nation. This happened when the feast of the Passover was near. The Passover is a great feast of Israel. They regarded the Passover as great because it was the day their people were saved out of Egypt through Moses.

The Jews had succeeded even in accusing Jesus and bringing Him to stand in the court of Governor Pilate. To put it simply, just as when a person commits a crime he is taken to the police station, held in a cell, tried in court, given a sentence, and sent to prison, Jesus had now come to the point of being held in the Praetorium, which corresponds to a court, to be tried and sentenced. Because the next day was the Passover, the Jews did not go into the Praetorium but gathered outside and shouted. Pilate came outside and asked the Jews what accusation they brought against this Man. *"They answered and said to him, 'If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.' Then Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and judge Him according to your law.' Therefore the Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,' that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die" (John 18:30–32)*. The Jews wanted to kill Jesus, but

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they said that they had no authority to do so. They said that if this Man had not done something evil, they would not have accused Him before him.

Then Pilate came back into the Praetorium and this time asked Jesus directly. "*Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?'" (John 18:33)*. It was because the title of the accusation was that He had said He was the King of the Jews. Since Rome was ruling Israel at that time, all the people of Israel were no different from captives and slaves of Rome. It was a nation that was a colony of Rome, under Roman rule, and Pilate asked whether He was king. In other words, the king at that time was the emperor of Rome, and if some other king of Israel had appeared besides the emperor, that was treason, and He could be punished for treason. That is why Pilate asked Jesus whether He was the King of the Jews. This word records the scene of the conversation between Jesus and Pilate.

Because Jesus is a gentle and very meek God of love, it is easy for us to misunderstand Jesus as a weak person, but we see that while Jesus was on this earth, although He treated the poor and the pitiable in that gentle way, He did not do so when He came out into the court. "*Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?'" (John 18:34)*. He asked in return whether he was saying this of himself, or whether others had said of Him that He was the King of the Jews. "*Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?'" (John 18:35)*. He was asking what evil thing on earth He had done that His own people had handed Him over to him, a Roman. "*Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My*

kingdom is not from here'" (John 18:36). The Lord was saying that this world, this nation of Israel, was not His kingdom, and that if His kingdom had belonged here, His servants would have fought against the Jews and would not have let Him be handed over to him. Then Pilate, since he had to fix a charge on which to inflict punishment, asked whether He was a king then, and Jesus said that, as he said, He was a king, that for this cause He was born and for this cause He had come into the world, namely to testify of the truth, and that everyone who is of the truth hears His voice.

"That I should bear witness to the truth"

I intend to preach the word to you taking this word as the standard. *"Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice'" (John 18:37)*. What is the reason Jesus came into the world? It is that He came to this earth to testify of the truth. Jesus was born on this earth clothed in human flesh, borrowing the body of a woman, but why did He come like this? He receives baptism from John the Baptist, is tried in Pilate's court, in a little while is hung on the Cross, nailed, and dies, and after dying rises again on the third day. What is the reason He did all these things? It is that He came to this earth to testify of the truth. And He says that everyone who is of the truth hears His voice. Jesus came to this earth to establish the kingdom of truth. It means that Jesus, who is God, is the King of truth.

It is also a very good thing for the mind for us to meditate deeply on the sufferings of Jesus as we enter Passion Week and

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to take part in them. But more than that, one thing we must clearly settle is that we must know and believe why Jesus came to this earth. Jesus came to this earth to save His people from their sins. Then what is Jesus saying in this word that He speaks now before Pilate, having come to this earth? All the truth of our salvation is contained in this word, that He came to testify of the truth.

Now the people had set Jesus up as the King of the Jews. Jesus had kept still, but the people set Him up as king. Seeing the people following Jesus in that way, the leaders said that this was what a king was—what else could be king? Except for the leaders, the Pharisees, the scribes, and the chief priests, all the people followed Jesus. So they called Jesus the King of the Jews. That king is amazing—He raises the dead and heals the sick, and when there is nothing to eat, food appears with a single prayer of blessing—so in the eyes of the people He was an amazing king. As many as five thousand people were seated to hear the word of Jesus, and without hanging a pot, without lighting a fire, without kneading dough, Jesus made bread on the spot and fed all five thousand, more than ten thousand people. Someone with such power was more than enough to be the King of the Jews, and there was nothing at all lacking in setting Jesus up as the King of the Jews. So the chief priests accused Jesus before Rome on the charge of being the King of the Jews. Because Israel was a colony of Rome, there could be no king in Israel. In a nation that has become a colony, even if there is a king, he is a king in name only and not a king, and a governor comes and rules the whole of that nation. Israel was in that situation too.

That is why Pilate asked Jesus whether He was the King of the Jews. It was because the scribes and the chief priests had accused Him, saying that this Man claimed to be the King of the Jews. When, in order to hang a charge on Him, he asked whether

He was the King of the Jews, Jesus said that, as he said, He was a king, that He had come for this work, namely, that He had come to testify of the truth. All His purpose is contained in this word, that He had come to testify of the truth. Then what truth did Jesus testify of? What truth was it, then, that the Lord intended to testify of, and what is truth? After this word, Pilate too asked what truth was.

The kingdom of righteousness established by the King of truth

What is truth? Truth means what is true. It is the word opposite to a lie; it refers to what is true. That He came for this, that He came to testify of the truth, means that He came to testify that He Himself is the truth. It means that He is the truth. Jesus, the Savior of you and me, testified of Himself, saying that He is the truth and that He had come to testify that He is the truth. Although He came to this earth to testify of the truth, He said that this world, this nation of Israel, was not His kingdom, and that His kingdom was elsewhere. His kingdom is the kingdom of truth. It means that He came to this earth to establish that kingdom and to gather people into His kingdom. He is King in His own kingdom, and He came to this earth to gather the people of truth, and He said that for that He had to testify that He is the truth. He has become our Savior, and He had to testify of what kind of truth He is, and He had now come to this earth to testify of it. So the Lord actually came to this earth and testified to us that He is the truth. He did the work of establishing His kingdom. What kind of kingdom did the Lord intend to establish? He intended to establish a kingdom of righteousness. He intended to establish a very fair kingdom, a very just kingdom, a kingdom

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full of love, a righteous kingdom in which there is absolutely no falsehood. Justice refers to what is completely honest.

If you go to a courthouse, there is a picture or a statue of a woman holding a hand scale. She is a woman holding a scale with two weights hanging from it, like the one in a jewelry shop. It means that what the court pursues is righteousness. The purpose of the court is to judge in the fairest and most proper way according to the law, without leaning to one side. It means that the Lord came to this earth and establishes His kingdom, and that He establishes a very fair kingdom. He came to testify of the truth, and He Himself is the truth; the Lord who saved you and me from sin is the truth. When the Lord, who is the truth, testifies of that truth, how does He do it? It means that He establishes righteousness. When our Lord received baptism from John the Baptist, He said, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The Lord fulfilled all justice by having the sin of mankind transferred to Him through that baptism, dying on the Cross, and rising again.

What is the justice of God? It is righteousness. He said that He would establish such a kingdom—a kingdom that is fair and just, a kingdom in which lies absolutely do not work, a kingdom in which unrighteousness and sin do not work, a kingdom absolutely ruled by fair love—and He said that He had come for such a kingdom, and He accomplished it all. The Lord came to this earth as a human being to bring about a righteous kingdom, received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, said that it is finished as He died hung on the Cross, and, having died, rose again on the third day and achieved it. The purpose for which the Lord came upon this earth was to establish a kingdom of righteousness, a kingdom of truth, a kingdom of justice. The Lord's kingdom is a perfect world that is just, righteous, and true, and in which there are no

lies. It means that He came to this earth wanting to establish such a kingdom, and He established it.

The Lord said that He came to testify of the truth, but how did the Lord testify of the truth? The Lord has already told us that He is the truth. *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6)*. He said that He Himself is the way and the truth. The truth—that is, the true word. The Lord came to save all the sinners of this earth from sin. In fact, this earth is a world that the devil governs, and it is very unrighteous. It is a world overflowing with sin, lies, and fraud. In the midst of that, the Lord came to this earth to save His people from their sins. And He established a kingdom of truth, a kingdom of love, a righteous kingdom, and He became the King of that kingdom. That is why there is also the gospel song that goes, "My shepherd is the King of love, and He is my shield in tribulation."

The work the Lord did when He came to this earth is the work of establishing His kingdom. By accomplishing that work and saving you and me, He Himself, who is King, established a righteous kingdom, a just kingdom, a kingdom of truth. When we were deceived by the devil, fell into sin, fell into weakness, and were dying, Jesus Christ came to this earth as the King of love and saved you and me from all sins, righteously and justly. He had the sin of His people transferred to His body through the baptism He received from John, gave Himself over to the Cross to be sacrificed in order to pay the price of sin, and died and rose again, and so truly became the Savior of you and me. The Lord is truly the King of love and the just King. In the heart of everyone on this earth there is a desire that seeks a just king, a righteous king. But to be completely just, one must have power. One must have power that does not give way before any force and can boldly accomplish what is just. It means that because

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Jesus Christ is the Almighty, He does not give way in any situation.

Jesus, who Himself met the demands of His people

When a person commits a crime, is dragged to court, and stands before the judge, he says, whatever it takes, in order to get a lighter sentence, that he has no sin even when he does, and that he did not do what he did, and when cornered he exercises his right to remain silent, trying by any means to get a lighter sentence. Otherwise he grovels, asking to be let off this once, asking to be forgiven, promising never to do it again, so as to get a lighter sentence. This is the heart of people as we know it. But the Lord did not exercise the right to remain silent or grovel like that before Pilate the judge. When Pilate asked whether He was the King of the Jews, Jesus asked in return whether he was saying this himself, or whether people had told him that He was the King of the Jews. After exchanging a few questions like this, when at last Pilate asked outright whether He was the King of the Jews, Jesus said, "As you say, I am a king; I have come for this; I have come to this earth to testify of the truth." Then Pilate asked, *"What is truth?"* The people living on this earth do not know what truth is. It means that they do not know what is true, what the true word is, what is true and not a lie.

But what kind of King has the Lord become for you and me? He has become the true God. He has become the God of truth, the God of love, the righteous God, the just God. Anyone may challenge God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, but there is no one who can win. Death cannot overcome Him, and no threat can overcome Him. Our Lord came to visit you and me in order to establish His kingdom—the kingdom of truth,

the just kingdom, the kingdom of love. Preaching like this, I feel as if I have become some kind of thinker or social activist. But the One who truly stood for justice in our hearts and accomplished justice is none other than Jesus. In this world, when the government does wrong, people hold demonstrations. For example, when foreign agricultural products are opened to import, we see farmers loading rice on their cultivators and flocking to the big cities to demonstrate. Then what does the state do? It does not come out and talk to them directly; it sets up barricades and has the police block everything. Then the farmers make a fuss for a while and go home. But it means that Jesus did not do that. When His people are wronged, when they are in hardship, when they have nothing to eat, when they are in a position to be destroyed, when they have to go to hell, He Himself solves every problem for His people.

When the people plead and ask for help, when they demand, "We must go to hell because of our sins; we are weak and cannot live according to the law of God, and we cannot keep the law; we are people who commit sin the moment we open our eyes; please solve all these problems of sin for us," the Lord did not leave that problem to subordinates but promised that He Himself would solve it. And according to that promise, in the New Testament age He came to this earth clothed in human flesh like a man, borrowing the body of a woman. And in order to solve the problem of the sin of His people, He received baptism from John and had all that sin transferred to His body. Because He had the sin of His people transferred to Him, He suffered in their place the contempt, shame, and pain that His people had to suffer. He was stripped of His clothes, spat upon, and disgraced before people, and He suffered on the Cross the suffering of death that His people had to go through. And He died and rose again on the third day, and solved the problems of the sin, sorrow, pain, and

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weakness of His people. This is what our Lord did. By coming to this earth and doing this work, the Lord saved you and me.

Is the Lord a weak and feeble One? The Lord is the Almighty. It says, *"Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4)*, and *"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6)*. Just as this word says, we lived without knowing the will of God. Even though we did not want to be born on this earth, we were simply born through our parents, and we lived our own way, following the current of the world. But it means that our Lord, the King of love, the King of truth, the King of justice, came to this earth and Himself saved us once and for all from sin, from death, from the curse, from judgment, and from all that shame and pain. The Lord said that He had come to testify of the truth. It means: I, who am God, am the real God of truth, the real God of love, the real just God, and the real fair God; therefore I am the fair God who saves those who believe in Me, the truth, and throws into the fire of hell those who do not believe. It means that although all people had sinned and were all bound for hell, He gave the gospel of the water and the Spirit and so gave everyone the opportunity to be saved. It means that after giving this opportunity, He gives complete salvation to those who believe in this gospel of truth, by which He saved us with justice and righteousness, and has allotted hell, according to His law, to those who do not believe.

Our King, who gave us just and fair salvation

Our Lord, who came to us like this, came to this earth as the truth in order to become the God of you and me, to give us real salvation, and to become the God of justice, the righteous God,

the God of love, and our Chief Shepherd. And so He saved you and me. There are praise lyrics that go, "My shepherd is the King of love, and He is my shield in tribulation," but has the Lord truly become the shield in your tribulation? Where else on this earth is there anyone like Jesus, a king like Jesus? Long ago Alexander the Great took control of the land from Greece through Persia and Egypt as far as India, and Genghis Khan of Mongolia took control of Europe and Asia. But none of those kings were righteous or just. Their words were not the truth. They only held authority for a while, and their authority did not last forever. But Jesus Christ, who is God, was born on this earth as a little child clothed in human flesh about two thousand years ago, and when He turned thirty He received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, and He died hung on the Cross and rose again, and so became the Savior of all mankind. He became the true Savior, righteous and just. And it means that even now, two thousand years later, through the written word of God, He has given true salvation to everyone who believes in Him as the Savior. He has given true life to you and me who believe in Him as the Savior, and has become our truly righteous and just King. So those who have become the people of the Lord by faith are just and righteous.

Whom do we follow? We follow the Lord. You and I have met the Lord, who is just and righteous, who does not lie, and who is the God of power. On this earth there are many petty gods of all kinds. Also, a person who is more excellent than ordinary people is called a sage, and once such a sage dies, he is called a god; but all such beings cannot solve even their own problem of sin, nor can they solve a single problem of the people who follow them. Jesus has saved all the people who follow and believe in Him, whoever they may be. Whatever shortcomings that person had, He granted the remission of sins. He saved justly. By

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sacrificing Himself, He saved justly and fairly.

Being just is the same as being fair. He truly had to save us in the fairest way. In order to do so, as you know, the Lord came to this earth and had our sins transferred to His body through the baptism He received from John. Bearing our sins on His body, He suffered on the Cross, in His own body, the punishment for sin that we were to suffer. The death we were to suffer, too, He Himself suffered, and He rose again. He saved us with His own life in order to give us new life. In this way He truly loved us. Therefore the Lord has become our true King. So when we call on the Lord, we cannot help saying with our own mouths that the Lord is truly the King of love, our King, the King of justice, the righteous King. In this way the Lord has become our true King, and so we sing praise. It means that we praise God. At such times the Lord hears our prayers and blesses us. When we were born into this world knowing nothing, lived fallen in sin, and could only go to hell, the Lord had the word of God preached through His servants, and He saves everyone who hears this word.

Is the Lord not truly amazing? Can the Lord be compared with the likes of Siddhartha, Confucius, or Mencius? Frankly speaking, they cannot even be compared with Him. Can the Lord be compared with philosophers, with the kings of the great powers of the world, or with moralists? All these are creatures. They are not righteous. They want to rule their nations righteously, but people, being creatures, have no power and so cannot rule righteously. To save one's people righteously and fairly and to rule that nation, one must have power. One must be able to solve the problems of one's own people oneself. Is righteousness achieved by asserting righteousness in words, without power? In every nation the leaders work with the aim of making an equal society, but does an equal society result? On

the contrary, inequality often grows worse, so that the well-off live better and the poor live worse. The thinkers of this world, with the ideologies and ideas they hope for, say that they wish the nation could be ruled this way and the people could be made like this, but there is not a single person who achieves it.

Qin Shi Huang of China, in order to rule the nation, burned and destroyed all the books of Confucius, Mencius, the moralists, and the religious people, and ruled the nation by setting up only what he himself said as law. Is that righteous? Being righteous, being the truth, means this: only when an enemy comes, or an inspector comes, and looks into a person in detail, as if peering through a magnifying glass to see whether he has any blemish or fault, and sees right through him, and there is not a single blemish, can that person be said to be righteous. The Lord was righteous in saving you and me, He was righteous in making you and me the people of God, and He was very righteous also in the matter of giving you and me new life so that we may live forever in the kingdom of God. Because He saved us righteously with His own life, with the price of that life, He gave to us who believe in this truth the qualification to live in His kingdom. It is not just anyone who can live in the kingdom of God. Only those who have been saved at the price of the Lord's life, the price of righteousness, can go and live in the kingdom of God.

The Lord is not servile. Because He loves mankind, He lowered Himself. In order to talk with weak people, He lowered Himself to their level. In reality, the Lord is neither weak nor powerless. But in order to converse with us weak human beings, for you and me, He lowered Himself somewhat. So we can know how just and how exalted a God He is. Some people go to all lengths to inflate even what they do not have, so as to appear to have plenty. But the Lord is the meek, humble, and almighty God. Such a God, because He loves you and me, loves mankind,

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lowered Himself and suffered for a while in order to save us. It was not because the Lord had no power that He received the death sentence Pilate passed. It was not because He had no power; it was because He had the sin of you and me and all mankind transferred to His body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, because all the sin of us mankind was on His body, that He gave His body over to the Cross in order to bear that sin and put that sin to death, and in order to receive the judgment for that sin. So it means that He died on the Cross for us and rose again, and that it was not because He had no power that He received the death sentence before a judge of this world and was killed. The Lord is not One who would be killed by creatures for lack of power.

A people who seek the truth

Christianity is not a religion. It is faith. It is seeing what God has done through the word of God and believing it in the heart. God existed before us mankind and made all things in the whole universe. So we hear what God has said, acknowledge that it is right, and believe it. Those who are on God's side understand the word the Lord has spoken. He said that everyone who is of the truth hears His voice. There are two kinds of people in this world. One kind is those who hear the word of God, say that it is right, and go before God. The other kind is those who ignore the word of God although it is right. Those who love unrighteousness, love sin, love cheating, and love what is filthy ignore the word of God. But the person of the first kind is one who says that although he cannot live according to the word of God, he wants to go and live in such a world as God has spoken of—just, fair, true, and without lies—and who seeks it. We are

people who seek the truth in this way. The Lord said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. In the hearts of you and me there are two kinds of heart, and when a bad heart rises up, we must ignore it. We must follow the Lord with the heart and faith that only the word the Lord has spoken is the truth, and only the Lord is right.

Even now, two thousand years after the Lord testified of the truth and spoke, there is no book that can surpass this Bible. There is not a single one—not a book of philosophy, of literature, or of thought. Whether written two thousand years ago or three or four thousand years ago, there is not a single book on this earth that surpasses this Bible. This word of the Bible has power, and so it comes to pass according to that word until this world ends, and forever. All the kings of this world, the writers, the scientists, the artists, the educators—all people read the Bible and learn from the Bible. In this Bible there is law—there is civil law and criminal law; the laws of nations come from here; and all this knowledge is in this Bible. How a person ought to live is all in this Bible. The Bible says that it is right and proper for a person to know God and to live respecting, loving, and fearing God, and apart from the Bible there is not a single book that tells us that. The book on this earth that took the longest to write is none other than this Bible. This Bible was written over several thousand years. All the words written over several thousand years through the servants of God were gathered, divided into the Old and New Testaments, and bound into one volume, and that is what is held in your hands and mine today. Therefore you and I, who live in this age, are very blessed people. We are people born in a good age. You and I, who hear and believe the word of God, are fortunate people. Not only I, but you who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe that our Lord is the King of truth. The Lord is never One who is

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powerless or servile. Jesus is God in His very nature, and He came to this earth to testify of this truth, that He saved us from all sins by the water and the Spirit and gave us new life, and even now He is testifying of this truth. As far as time is concerned, the Lord has already testified of the truth completely. He has saved you and me by the water, the blood, and the Spirit. We believe this truth. And so we have been saved.

Although we have been saved by believing in the truth of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, in the Lord's Passion Week we must properly know the Lord who saved us in this way. We must know well how you and I became the children of God, and whose people we, who have become the children of God, are. We who have been saved by believing in the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit are the people of the God of truth. We are the people of the righteous King, the people of the just King. So you and I do not practice lawlessness even while we live on this earth. It means that we do not deliberately defraud others or put them in difficulty, but bring benefit to others. It means that this is also how we live in this world. I am so proud of our Lord. Are you proud of the Lord too?

Our God, of whom we are proud

If the God one believes in has no power and cannot solve a single one of one's problems, and cannot solve either the problem of the world to come or the things happening now, would one not be ashamed of that God? But the God who saved you and me is One to be proud of. He is not a God to be ashamed of but a God of power to be very proud of. The Lord said: I have come for this; I have come to testify of the truth; it is not because I have no power that I am tried in Pilate's court, and it is not

because I have no power that I am nailed; I will die for you for a little while; it is not because I have no power that I submit and suffer mockery and hardship, but for My people I have given Myself up of My own free will. The Lord is truly our King of love and our shepherd of love. I am so proud of our Lord that I am not ashamed but stand tall before any religion or any thinker. They cannot even be compared with our Lord. So, because I am proud of our Lord, I am making all these sermons, in which I have preached the word of the Lord, into documents and spreading them throughout the whole world. The books we spread are by no means inferior to other books that go out to the whole world. To receive the remission of sins, anyone must read these books containing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and even to live a life of faith after receiving the remission of sins, one must read these books. The word of the Lord is covering the whole world. Books in the languages of many nations are going out to the whole world, and as paper books, too, they will cover the whole world. Because this is not my word but the word of God, and because I am proud of that God, people read these books and are all saved and obtain eternal life. So I truly give thanks before God. It is so good that the God we believe in is so worthy of pride, so worthy of respect, and so lovable.

When I was a child, I believed in Buddhism. The core of Buddhism is that you should become a god. The word Buddha means the enlightened one, but in the end it says that a person should become a god by himself. A man named Siddhartha was born a prince in a small region of India, agonized over birth, aging, sickness, and death, and died. Agonizing over the fact that people are born, get sick, grow old, and die, and agonizing over the thought that people must cast off their desires—to put it simply, that they must be born again—he is said to have attained enlightenment sitting under a bodhi tree, and he died at the age of

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eighty. After that, people of later generations, saying that the thought of Siddhartha was so good, regarded him as a god, and a religion that follows him came into being. Buddhism is a religion made by instinctively thinking that one must not kill living things, and that if one kills a living thing now, one may go to hell in the next world. But the core of that Buddhism is: become a god yourself; you are the Buddha; you are a god. Can a person become a god? Can he become one if he tries hard? He cannot.

Not long ago a famous monk who wrote several books on the theme of non-possession passed away. It is said that before he died, he said that although he had spoken so much and written so much, his words were pollution, and said that his books should not be published after his death. In fact, it is called non-possession, but to really live without possessing anything is torment. Living without owning anything feels very refreshing, but how can a person live without owning anything? It is proper to live owning what one needs in suitable measure and sharing in suitable measure; non-possession is not a good thing. The terms ‘a life of poverty’ and ‘non-possession’ are among the most commonly used terms in religion, and the words are good, but a person who lacks the ability to live that way must live owning a certain amount. I am not despising that man now. He asserted non-possession because religious people chase after wealth so much, and that spirit is truly good. He said that the books he wrote were the pollution of words and told them not to publish them anymore, and because of that, they say, people seek those books even more.

In Catholicism, they speak of a life of poverty. In the Gospels, Jesus said that if anyone wants to take your tunic, give him your cloak also; that if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also; and that if anyone asks you to go one mile with him, go with him two. So there are people who try hard to live

according to that word. I, too, was once one of those people. To become a true friar in Catholicism, one must reach the point of sucking out and washing the pus of a person whose pus is oozing out, and of taking off even one's underclothes and giving them away if someone asks for one's clothes. Only at that level can one be called a friar, but there are hardly any such people. Long ago, before I was born again, when I was very young, I fell ill and was once admitted to a hospital run by the Catholic Church and treated there. At that time there were many patients in that hospital, and they say the patients held a vote among themselves. I am telling this story only because I must. They chose who among them was qualified to become a priest, and they chose me. Although I was not a Catholic but a Protestant at the time, I was chosen as the one who could become a priest and do such work. Although I was a patient then, I helped the patients around me a great deal.

There is a story that a certain pastor sucked out people's pus, and I too would have sucked out the pus if the person next to me were dying because of pus. In the old days, perhaps because I was young, love boiled over in me. But that is a love that burns for a moment, not a love that lasts forever. It seems the devil had set a fire in my heart. At any rate, I truly met the Lord and came to know what true love is. Buying a bowl of rice for a hungry person is also love, and of course that too is good, but we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to him. Only then can that person know the love of God, receive the love of God, receive the blessing of God, and live well. That is why I preach this gospel together with you. That is why I put all my strength into preaching this gospel. Today, too, I work together with you, who have become the people of God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and I work together with the Lord. I am so thankful. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ, who is the truth

< John 18:33-38 >

"Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.' Pilate said to Him, 'What is truth?' And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all.'"

Jesus, who revealed before Pilate that He is King

In John chapter 17, Jesus, asking that the Son be glorified, spoke all the words that were like a last will—that He gives eternal life to all those the Father has given the Son, and that the Father and He are one. Then, in chapter 18, He went with the disciples over the Brook Kidron, to the place we know as the Mount of Olives, and prayed there, and "*Then Judas, having*

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received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?' They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus said to them, 'I am He.' And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground" (John 18:3–6). Jesus asked again whom they were seeking, and saying, *"I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way" (John 18:8)*, He protected His disciples and was taken away. And He was tried in Pilate's court.

Looking at this word, we see Jesus coming to stand in Pilate's court. To put it in our language, Jesus went into a government office. Pilate asked. *"Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered him, 'Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?'" (John 18:33–34)*. When Pilate asked whether He was the King of the Jews, Jesus asked in return whether he was saying this of himself, or whether others had told him this about Him. Then Pilate said that the chief priests and the Pharisees had accused Him to him, saying that He was the King of the Jews and was trying to establish a nation as the King of the Jews. *"Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here'" (John 18:35–36)*.

Jesus stated definitely that His kingdom was not of this world. Then Pilate asked whether it was not the case that, because His

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kingdom was not of this world, they had consequently handed Him over to him, and whether that did not mean that He was a king. *"Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice'" (John 18:37)*. Jesus said that, as he said, He was a king, but that this world was not His kingdom, and that if He had been the king of this world His servants would have fought so that He would not be delivered to the Jews; and He said that for this cause He was born and for this cause He had come into the world, namely, to testify of the truth. Saying that He Himself was King, He said that He had come to testify of the truth. When Jesus spoke like this, Pilate ended up just asking what truth was, then.

Jesus said clearly that He had come for this, that He had come to testify of the truth. Then what is truth? The key here is: I am King; I am not the King of this world but the King of the kingdom of God, and I came into this world to testify of the truth. We must examine the word with our focus on what it is to testify of the truth.

The meaning of His coming to testify of the truth

In chapter 17, too, Jesus, speaking of Himself, asked to be glorified and said that the Father had given the Son authority over all people so that He should give eternal life to those the Father had given the Son, and said, *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3)*. He said that the Father had led souls so that the Son might give eternal life to those the Father had given Him, that God the Father had sent Him to this earth, and that

upon those who know the Son comes eternal life, that is, the blessing of living forever. And coming to chapter 18, in Pilate's court, to the question of whether He was the King of the Jews, He said: I am King; I am not the King of the Jews but the King of the kingdom of God, which is not of this world; and I came to this earth to testify of the truth.

Then what does it mean that He came to testify of the truth, and what is truth? Just as Pilate asked what truth was, we too must ask what truth is. It is because Jesus said that He had come to testify of the truth. Truth means that it is not falsehood but the true word. What does that mean? Truth is a word that refers to Himself. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—this God is the truth, and He came to testify of this truth. It means: God the Father sent Me, and I came into this world to remit the sins of those whom God the Father loves, those the Father has sent to Me, and to give them eternal life. To testify of the truth is to testify that He Himself is the truth.

The truth is not in the world. It is in Jesus Christ. Then what is truth? It is that Jesus Christ is the truth, that Jesus is the true King, and that the fundamental nature of Jesus is the LORD of hosts. It means that He is the LORD of hosts, God, who Himself governs, reigns over, rules, and commands all things, and who is the Master of life, who both gives life and takes it away. There are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, but Jesus Himself, upholding the will of the Father, came to this earth to testify through Himself of what God is like. So when Jesus asked Peter who they thought He was, Peter answered, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. The word Christ means King, means High Priest, and means the Prophet who preaches the real truth. What did Jesus Himself want to reveal on this earth? It means that He came to this earth to reveal that He Himself is the truth, that He Himself is the King

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of kings, the Creator, the Governor, the Commander, the Savior, and the Judge, and that He is revealing it now. It means: "I am the King; I am the High Priest; I am the Savior who removes the sin of mankind; I am the Prophet who preaches the knowledge of the real truth to people; I have come to fulfill that role, and to save, judge, command, and govern."

Jesus Christ is King. He is the true God and the King of kings. Just as His Father is the true King, He Himself is also King. We must know that. What does it mean that He came to testify of the truth, and that everyone who is of the truth hears His voice? Jesus is testifying of Himself, saying: I was with the Father and came to this earth; upholding the will of the Father, I came to this earth to do the work of saving you from sin according to the will of the Father; and, with that glory I had with the Father, I am the One who made you, the One who made the creatures; I am your Master. It means that Jesus, while being the Son of God the Father, was there together and worked together when the universe was created and man was created. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), "Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3)*. Who is it that said, "Let there be light"? It is Jesus. When Jesus said, "Let there be," "Let there be," everything came to be. All the myriad things that now exist are what Jesus said should be. Of course, the Father was there together too, and the Holy Spirit was there together too.

We must know and believe, concerning Jesus, who is the real truth, that He is the truth and what is true—that He is the true God, the true Savior, the true King, the true Commander, the true Governor, and the true Judge. This is precisely what it is to know the truth and to believe the truth. What is truth? In Buddhism they ask what the Way is, and say that one must have the Way in order to be enlightened. The religious people of the world

speak of non-possession, but sometimes it is exposed that they actually own a great deal, and sometimes they gain a name by saying that dying without owning anything is the life of a true disciple. Those people are trying to be recognized in this world. But Jesus, in whom we believe, was not of this world. It means that since He was not of this world but belonged to God the Father, He was not a man of this world.

Jesus Himself is the King of kings, the Creator, the Governor, the Ruler, the Commander, the Savior, and the truth. His word that He is the King of kings is absolutely not a lie. That is the truth. Governor, Creator, Ruler, Commander, Savior—it means that there is not one falsehood in it. He said that He had come to testify of the truth, and we believe in Jesus because He Himself is the truth. He Himself is the Creator, God, our Savior, the Governor, the Ruler, and the Judge. By believing in Him and believing the word He has spoken, we become those who are of the truth, and those who are of the truth become the people of God, the children of God. To belong to Him means that we are not of this world. Those who believe in our Lord are the same human beings as others, but they are people who are not of this world.

Those who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus

If we were of this world, we would have to work together with the Christian pastors of this world in the same denominations. Jesus is the One who came to this earth as the King of kings to save mankind from sin and also to judge, and He has already accomplished salvation; yet among those who claim to believe in Jesus there are far too many people who do not believe in Jesus as God, as King. There are even sects that

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do not believe it at all if you ask whether Jesus is God. You do not know this well because you have not studied theology, but those who do the new theology, which tries to understand the word not as it is in the Bible but by racking human brains, do not believe in the divinity of Jesus, in His being God. They do not believe in His being King.

But Jesus said in Pilate's court that He was a king. When Pilate asked whether He was the King of the Jews, Jesus asked whether he was saying this because he felt so in his heart, or whether those people had told him so, and Pilate said that the Jews and the chief priests had accused Him, saying that He was the King of the Jews, one who would go into politics in the future and try to liberate them from Rome. So Jesus said that if He were their king, there was no way they would have accused Him and handed Him over here, and that His kingdom was not of this world but was elsewhere. When Pilate asked whether that did not mean that He was a king, He told Pilate: Yes, I am a king; I have come to testify of the truth; everyone who is of the truth hears My voice. Pilate asked what truth was, and then, washing his hands, said: I do not know; what am I to do with your king? Since you ask me to crucify Him and kill Him, I will do as you wish; as I see it, this Man has no sin at all, but since you wish it, I give Him over. And he passed the death sentence, washed his hands, and went inside.

Jesus is the King of this universe and the King of the kingdom of God. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Without Jesus Christ nothing that exists came into being. Then did God make the devil too? Certainly not. He made the world of the angels, the world of spiritual beings, the visible world and the invisible world—all of them good worlds. Then why is there a devil? The devil was not made separately; the one who opposes God, that is, the adversary (Satan), is the devil. The word for an

adversary who opposes God, opposes the righteous, and hinders them is itself the word devil. When some people oppose the Church of God and try to find fault with it and tear it down, that is an adversary; and one who is an adversary before God is precisely the devil.

Among the people of this world, even among those who believe in Jesus, there are many who do not know the fact that Jesus is King. There are hardly any who know that He, who is the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, came to this earth, received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, and saved us by the water and the blood, through the sacrifice of shedding His blood and dying on the Cross and rising again. There are hardly any who believe it. And there are hardly any who know that He is the true Prophet, the One who testifies of the truth. That is why they keep trying to tear apart and alter this word. But He said that, although they are a very small minority among the people of this world, everyone who is of the truth, those who accept the word of God, hears His voice.

Long ago I knew nothing of the word of the Bible. I did not even know there was a Bible. But one day, as I was walking along the road, a Gospel tract of Matthew was lying there, and when I picked it up and looked at it, there was "so-and-so begot so-and-so, and so-and-so begot so-and-so," and I just read it through. But I finished reading it in no time, and I thought, "So this is what the One called Jesus is like." Then a little later I received from someone something else that had been put out by some Bible society and read it, and I finished it all in a flash, in less than a day. But after reading it, that word kept going around in my heart and in my head, and I found myself believing what this word was saying. That was even though I did not then know the baptism Jesus received from John. So I accepted it, and after a long time had passed I have come to stand before you today

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like this, and when I read this word, this word is accepted and believed within me. The fact that it is the truth, that Jesus is the King of kings, the Creator, the Judge, the Governor, the Commander, and the Savior—all of it is believed within me. Do you also find yourselves believing it? But a person who does not belong to God cannot believe this.

When I was working in a certain region, I once met the pastor in overall charge of the university student mission work in that area, a foreign missionary, and a pastor of a certain denomination, and we came to talk with the Bible open. That pastor had two members of his church sit with him, and I had several members of our church sit with me, and we came to converse together, and that man said to me that if I explained scientifically how Jesus was born borrowing the body of a virgin, he would believe in Jesus. So I said, "Pastor, so you do not believe in Jesus at present," and he told me to explain it.

So I said that a prophet had prophesied in the Old Testament and it had actually come to pass according to that prophecy, and that He was born just as it was prophesied, *"The virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (Matthew 1:23)*, and the word of God was fulfilled, so what was he asking me to explain scientifically? Even so, he asked how a woman who did not know a man could conceive and give birth to Jesus. It is embarrassing, but at such times no kind words come out. I said: You say that you are guiding students now, but if you yourself do not believe in Jesus, whom are you teaching? Jesus is the Creator, and He came in a human body, borrowing the body of a virgin, in order to save people according to the Old Testament, so what reason is needed there? There is nothing God cannot do, and He does everything with a single word, so since He promised it, He fulfilled it. I said that a shepherd is one who tends sheep, and that is what a pastor is, so

how could he call himself a pastor while not even believing in Jesus? And I said to the students who had come along, "You have heard it just now; your church's pastor is teaching you while not even believing in Jesus," and they too were dumbfounded and did not know what to do. I said, "Do you know how many pastors like you there are in our country? I know very well how many theological seminaries, professors, and doctors of theology there are that do not acknowledge the divinity of Jesus."

So we believe all of it—that Jesus is God, the Creator, the King of kings, the Governor who governs all things and the Ruler who rules, the Savior who came to this earth by the water and the Spirit to save mankind from sin and saved us, the Judge on the last day to come, and the Master of the kingdom of heaven—but it means that in this world there are many people who do not believe so. As for the truth, to believe all of it—our Savior, who is the LORD of hosts, His nature, that He has become our Savior, and that He is the One who will judge mankind in the future—is to know the truth and to believe the truth. What is truth? It says, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. It means that we must know the truth. What is truth? It is Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus Christ? He who is the Creator, the King of kings, the Ruler, the Commander, the Savior, the Judge, the Master of the kingdom of heaven, and the Master of all things—Jesus Christ is the truth. So to know Jesus properly is to know the truth, and to believe in Jesus properly, to believe what He came to this earth and did for us, is to believe the truth.

Seeing such things, we are truly fortunate. I have often gone out to university campus mission groups, and when you go there, many staff workers of the various mission groups come out. When I talk with those staff workers, they simply do not know—

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they know far too little. When I ask what the name Jesus Christ means, the majority do not know. It is too embarrassing even to pretend to know, so I set it aside and try to get acquainted with them, but there really are many who do not know. Once those people have met me, they see me from far off and run away this way and that. I follow after them again, saying, “Staff worker, hallelujah, sorry, but please come here a moment,” and we meet halfway and talk about whether the mission work is going well these days. How good it would be if those people, too, preached the real truth! It is because it is a pity that they cannot preach it, since they do not know the truth, that I talk with them like that. There are countless theological seminaries and denominations that do not know the truth. Still, those called conservative denominations at least know the fact that Jesus is God and the Creator, though they do not really know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is just so regrettable.

To whom do we belong?

But to whom do we belong? We belong to God. We must know to whom you and I belong. If we belong to God, then even if an epidemic goes around this world and the world is destroyed, it makes no difference to us, because we do not live on this earth forever and our kingdom is elsewhere. We are merely careful so as not to cause harm to others. One who believes the fact that Jesus is the truth is one who belongs to God, but one who does not believe belongs to the devil, to the adversary. One who is of the truth belongs to heaven, and one who belongs to the adversary belongs to this world. Therefore we must know to whom we ourselves belong, and while we live in this world we come across and run into many things, so we must judge by the

standard of where you and I belong—by the standard that I belong to God. We judge whether I should do this or not do it by that standard.

And we carry on the literature ministry. Why is that? It is because we have the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it is in order to share the truth. To share that truth is not to share anything else of mine, but to share who Jesus Christ is. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the LORD of hosts, God, who made, governs, and commands all things and all hosts. It is to share that Jesus is the true King of kings, because the Father has given the Son authority in heaven and on earth. It is because it was said that the Father gave the Son authority in heaven and on earth.

So while living on this earth, when a negative thought comes to mind, or we have a strange dream, or our thinking goes wrong, or we hear a strange voice, we must resist it, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ: Satan, get away!" It is because Jesus Christ is the truth, and because Jesus Christ, who is the King of kings, overcomes everything. That is why we must command in His name. Even if powerful people on this earth press us, it is nothing much. Even if we lose in this world, we are never failures, because we belong to the kingdom of heaven, to the truth. On the day we carry out well the command given by Jesus Christ, who is the truth, and stand before the Lord, we succeed. Whatever humiliation we suffer on this earth makes no difference. So we must surely know that we belong to God and live accordingly. Only by living that way can we discern the will of God and live on.

When people fail and things go wrong in the world, they think they are failures, but that is not real failure. That is a failure through which one can seek God, through which one can meet God. It becomes a good opportunity to meet God. That is why

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God gave mankind thorns and thistles and permitted disease, death, and pain. He permitted failure. A person who has not tasted failure does not accept Jesus Christ as the truth. It is when we fail that we come to know the fact that we are nothing, and that we need the King of kings, the Governor, the Commander, the Ruler, the Savior—Jesus Christ. When we know ourselves rightly, we come to know Jesus Christ, who is the truth, rightly, and we come to yield to Him, obey Him, and submit to Him willingly. It is because He is our true King, our true Ruler, and our true Commander. Apart from Him there is no one who can give us a true command. It means that however clever a person may be, since I believe in God, only God is the true Commander, Ruler, Governor, Savior, the One who gives eternal life, and the One who gives the kingdom of heaven; so what can a person do for me, and does he even have the ability to do it? Such a person is merely someone to whom the gospel is to be preached.

Do not become an adversary

We must not belong to the adversary. Pilate asked what truth was. Pilate is an adversary. Since Jesus said that He was King, he should have accepted it. Then he should have asked why He was king and where His kingdom was, and accepted it. But Pilate tossed it aside, asking what truth was and whether this was not it, and passed the death sentence, told them to crucify Him, washed his hands, and went away. He washed his hands in a basin, wiped them with a large towel, and went inside, but his heart, his conscience, was pricked. He thought: I passed the sentence to crucify such a sinless One; it is the greatest wrong of my whole life; if it were not for that, I would have succeeded. According to the story handed down, Pilate afterward became

sick at heart, and died after continually filling a basin with water and washing and wiping his hands. Pilate appears in the Apostles' Creed too. We confess: 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, was crucified, and died. The one who ordered Jesus to be crucified is Pilate. It is Pilate—not Herod the tetrarch, and not the high priest of that time. It means that Pilate took all that sin upon himself, lived washing his hands all his life, and died like that.

We must not oppose Jesus. If we oppose Jesus' being our God, we become children of the devil. It is a disaster. Whatever failure we suffer in this world is all right, but if we oppose Jesus, or oppose what Jesus did, or do not accept it, we become adversaries. We go to hell and are judged. It is a disaster. So how fortunate we are! Do you believe that Jesus has become our King and our truth? Then how fortunate that is! I could have suffered, having been born under parents who believed in a wrong religion, but even before I entered elementary school I tried to escape, thinking that I must not live here, that this was not the way. My parents left me nothing at all, and I had nothing to lean on. Living like that, I had a great many hardships. Then, looking at the Gospel tract I picked up on the road, that word of the Bible, I met the Lord. I met the Lord while looking at the word of the Bible, and while looking at the word of God I came to know how my sins passed on to Jesus Christ, how Jesus received baptism from John and had my sins transferred to Him, how He was hung on the Cross, and how He rose again from the dead. And I came to testify of this.

I am one who belongs to God. So even though I have no great wealth to my name, even though I do not ride around in the expensive cars that come out these days, and even though people

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do not come and bow and scrape before me, I am happy working with the brothers. I am happy when I eat something delicious, and even when I do not eat something delicious I am happy working with the brothers, serving together with you, and preparing this and that for you to eat. Why is that? I am happy because I am living together with those who belong to God. I am working together with those who belong to God, those who are of the truth. That is why I am happy. All that I have is yours, and all that you have is mine.

The faith that accepts the truth in the heart

Jesus said that He Himself was the One who had come to testify of the truth. It means that He Himself is the truth, and He came to testify of Himself. After He saved us, He told us to testify of Him, and that is precisely to preach the gospel. *"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)*. It means that we are to testify. Is it not something to be thankful for? We have only to live doing this all our lives and then go when the Lord tells us to come. Even my taking care of my body is not because I begrudge my own death. It is because I fear that after I am gone, unqualified people will play king within this fellowship; I am regulating myself in order to maintain on this earth, too, the Lord's reigning as King within the kingdom of God, within the truth. I have seen a great deal of that. I have seen many false people playing king where there is no true king. Because I know that must not happen, I have only to live until the day the Lord comes and then go. You can do the same. The Lord came to this earth to testify of the truth, and I accepted it. Have you accepted it too? Do you accept all the things the Lord did and the things

He said? That is a true blessing. Faith is nothing greatly different. It is accepting in the heart what the Lord has spoken through the word. You must know and believe the fact that the Lord is more pleased with that than with any labor you may do.

I do not tell people to believe by force. And the gospel, too, must be preached at the right time. For some people, when their hearts are not ready, however zealously we preach, it becomes nothing but a theory. This gospel is needed when a person falls into distress and comes to know his own evil. That is when a doctor is needed. So we leave them alone. Leaving them alone does not mean we have set them aside; it means we wait. We wait for your family members too. They still have much strength and so hold out, do not believe, and do not accept the truth; so if they do not accept the truth even when we teach it to them, let us wait.

In a little while, the Lord, who has become our King, will come to this earth with true kingly authority. He will come with majesty, as befits a King. He will come with the heavenly hosts and angels of the kingdom of heaven, to rapture all the righteous on this earth. The rapture does not take place at a peaceful time like this. You must know the fact that He comes at a time when people are seized and thrown into prison, beheaded, shot, and burned to death—when people are burned to death for saying they believe in Jesus. He absolutely does not come at a peaceful time. It was said that the Lord comes when people say, "Peace and safety," and He comes when the Antichrist appears. Who is the Antichrist? One who opposes Christ is the Antichrist. Each one of us can become one who opposes Christ. Even after believing, if we know only theoretically, we can become adversaries.

We give thanks before the Lord, who has revealed the truth to us and taught it to us. What is truth? Jesus Christ is the truth. All

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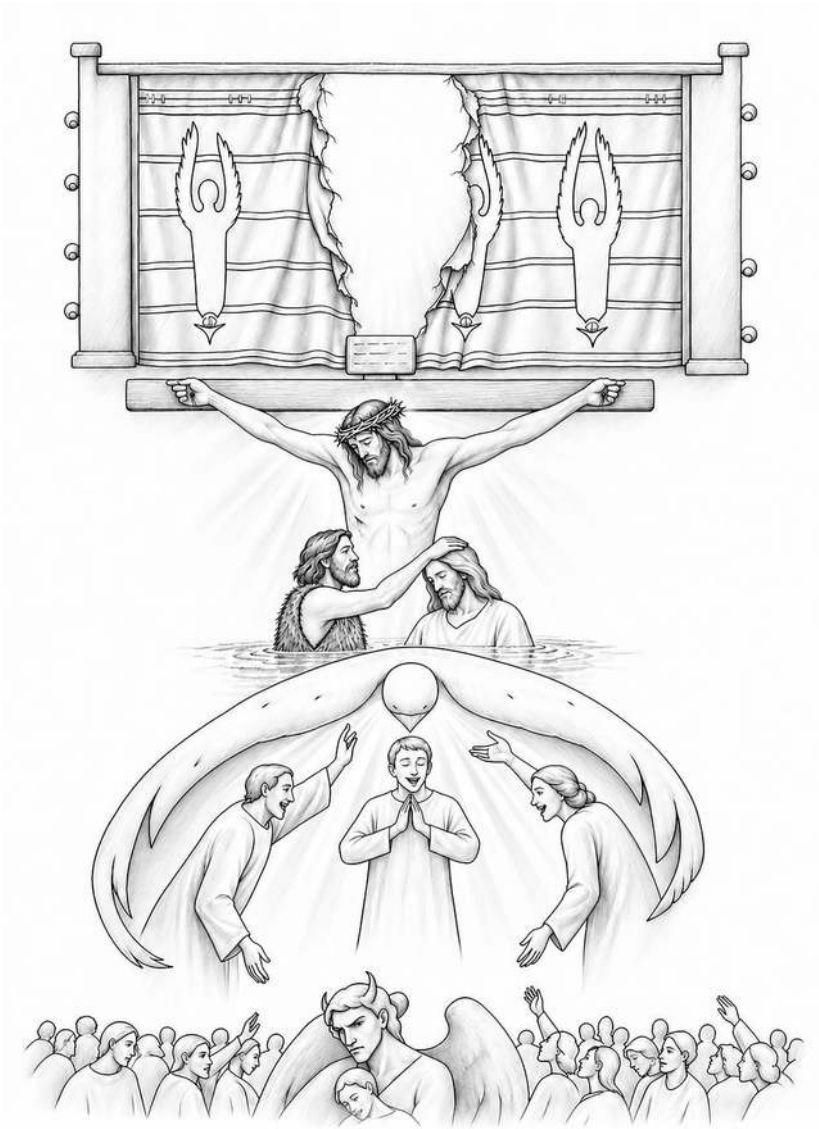
that Jesus Christ came to this earth and spoke and accomplished is the truth. It is true. It is true salvation; He is the true Ruler, the true Governor, the One who truly gives eternal life, the true Master of the kingdom of heaven, and the Lord who will take us to Himself. The Lord is our eternal shepherd of love. He is the shepherd of you and me. We give thanks by faith that the Lord has come to us, sacrificed Himself for us, and met us. ✉

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CHAPTER

19

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John Chapter 19 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

John 19:1–16—why was Jesus, who had no sin, scourged and mocked and delivered to the Cross?

John 19:1–16 is the scene in which Jesus, who had no sin, was scourged and mocked and at last delivered to the Cross. Jesus did not suffer because of His own sin. Because He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment of that sin in our place. This word shows the righteousness and love of God, who wants to save sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. It was because of our iniquities that Jesus was scourged

Pilate found no fault in Jesus, yet he took Jesus and scourged Him. The scourging Jesus received was not merely the physical pain that took place before the crucifixion. It was the process by which Jesus received in our place the punishment that sinners had to receive.

Isaiah 53:5 prophesied, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The*

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chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed." It was not because of His own transgressions that Jesus was struck with stripes, but because of our transgressions and iniquities.

Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. Therefore, the scourging and punishment inflicted on Jesus were the judgment for our sins that He had borne. Because Jesus was struck with stripes, those who believe have been released from the punishment and curse of sin.

2. The crown of thorns and the purple robe show the curse and mockery Jesus received

The soldiers twisted a crown of thorns, put it on the head of Jesus, and put a purple robe on Him. Then they mocked Him, saying, *"Hail, King of the Jews!"* and struck Jesus with their hands.

In Genesis, thornbushes are connected with the curse that came upon the ground because of the sin of man. The figure of Jesus wearing the crown of thorns shows the Savior who bore the sin and curse of mankind, which He had taken upon Himself with the baptism He received from John.

The soldiers mocked Jesus as if He were a false king, but Jesus is in fact the King of kings. To the soldiers, the purple robe and the crown of thorns were tools of mockery, but even in the midst of that, the fact was revealed that Jesus is the King of love who bears the sin and curse of His people.

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3. Pilate found no fault at all in Jesus

Pilate declared several times that he found no fault in Jesus. In verse 4 he said, *"that you may know that I find no fault in Him,"* and in verse 6 he said again, *"I find no fault in Him."*

This clearly shows that Jesus did not suffer because of His own sin. Jesus is the Son of God, who has no sin. But because He had all the sin of sinners transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, He stood in the place of sinners.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says that God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Because Jesus, who had no sin, received the judgment of sinners, the sinner who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and obtains the righteousness of God.

4. Jesus, who stood before the words *"Behold the Man!"* was the figure of the Savior who took the place of sinners

Jesus came out before the people, having been struck with stripes, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, *"Behold the Man!"*

At that time, the figure of Jesus was full of suffering and shame. But in that very figure, the love of God toward sinners was revealed. Jesus gave up the glory of heaven and came in the body of a man, and He bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John. Now, because of that sin, He was scourged and mocked and went forward toward the death of the Cross.

Jesus received in our place the shame, condemnation, and punishment that we had to receive. Therefore, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel in which the Lord said only with words that He loved us, but the gospel of salvation that Jesus revealed by bearing our sins and punishment with His own body.

5. Jesus did not deny that He is the Son of God

The Jews insisted that Jesus had to die because He had made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate heard this, he was the more afraid, and he asked Jesus, *"Where are You from?"*

Jesus is not merely a great prophet or a religious leader. He is the Son of God, who was sent by God the Father and came in the flesh. He is also God, who created all things together with the Father, and the Savior who gives life and eternal life to sinners.

Because Jesus is the true God, He could bear all the sin of mankind, and He could save all who believe with His one sacrifice. If one denies the divinity of Jesus, one cannot fully believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished either. One must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Creator, and the Savior.

6. Even Pilate's authority was allowed by God

Pilate said to Jesus that he had the authority to release Him and the authority to crucify Him. But Jesus answered, *"You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above."*

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Pilate thought that he could decide whether Jesus would live or die, but all authority comes from God. Even the fact that Jesus was delivered into the hands of Pilate and hung on the Cross was being accomplished within the will that God had established in order to save sinners.

It was not because He had no strength that Jesus was arrested or delivered to the Cross. Jesus said that He has power to lay down His life of Himself and power to take it again. He went that way of His own will in order to be judged on the Cross for all the sin of mankind, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John.

But the fact that the will of God was accomplished does not remove the sin of Pilate and the Jewish leaders. As Jesus said that the one who delivered Him to Pilate had the greater sin, those who accused Jesus and handed down the unjust verdict each had their own guilt.

7. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, yet he chose the power of the world

Pilate tried hard to release Jesus. But when the Jews cried out, *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend,"* his attitude changed. It was because he thought that if he released Jesus, his own position and political safety could be put in danger.

Even though Pilate knew the fact that Jesus had no sin, he feared the voice of the people and the power of Caesar more. He chose the way of protecting his own position rather than the truth and righteousness. In the end, though he was the judge, he handed down an unjust verdict and delivered Jesus to the Cross.

A person cannot be saved merely by knowing the facts about Jesus. One must not stop at acknowledging the fact that Jesus is

the One who has no sin, but must believe with the heart that He is the Savior who removed all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection.

8. The words *"We have no king but Caesar!"* were a confession that rejected God

When Pilate said to the Jews, *"Behold your King!"* they cried out that Jesus should be done away with and crucified. The chief priests finally answered, *"We have no king but Caesar!"*

With their lips they said that they served God, but they did not receive as their King the Son whom God had sent. They chose their religious vested interests and the power of the world over the word of God. These words of theirs were a confession that rejected Jesus and chose the king of the world.

Jesus is not One who becomes King only when people acknowledge Him as King. He is by nature God, who created all things, and the King of kings. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe in and serve Jesus not only as their Savior, but also as their King and Master.

9. With Jesus being delivered to the Cross, the judgment of salvation began

Pilate finally delivered Jesus to be crucified. This was the way in which Jesus received the judgment for all the sin of mankind, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John.

The baptism He received from John and the Cross are

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connected as one work of salvation. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and He received the punishment for that sin in our place on the Cross. Then, by rising again from the dead, He overcame sin and death and became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

Therefore, when we look at the scourging and the Cross of Jesus, we must not think only of the misery of His suffering. We must believe with the heart that this suffering was the very punishment He received because of our sins, and that it was the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished because He loved us.

Conclusion

John 19:1–16 is the word in which Jesus, who had no sin, received scourging, mockery, and condemnation in the place of sinners and was delivered to the Cross. Because Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, He received in our place the judgment and curse of sin that we had to receive.

Jesus, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, looked like a mocked prisoner, but in reality He was the King of kings who saves His people. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, yet he chose the power of the world, and the chief priests, while claiming to believe in God, cried out, *"We have no king but Caesar!"*

Unlike them, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive Jesus as their God, Savior, and King. They believe with the heart the fact that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin in our place on the Cross, and accomplished

perfect salvation by rising again from the dead. This is the righteousness of God that Jesus revealed through His suffering, and the perfect love toward sinners.

John 19:17–27—was it not in order to have all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and to receive the judgment of that sin in our place, that Jesus was hung on the Cross?

John 19:17–27 records that Jesus carried His cross to Golgotha and was crucified between two sinners, and that in that process the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled. Because Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment of that sin in our place on the Cross. The reason the Son of God, who had no sin, stood in the place of sinners was to save us from sin and judgment.

1. Jesus carried the cross because He had borne the sin of mankind

The Gospel of John records that Jesus, bearing His own cross, went out to Golgotha. The parallel Gospels record that while Jesus was on the way, the soldiers laid the cross on Simon of Cyrene. Jesus first carried the cross and went on, and after His body had grown weak from the severe scourging, Simon of Cyrene carried that cross and followed behind Him.

The cross of Jesus was not the punishment for sins that He had committed. Jesus is by nature the Son of God, who has no

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sin at all. But because He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, He carried the cross, the punishment of sin.

After the baptism, John the Baptist testified of Jesus, saying, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* The figure of Jesus carrying the cross toward Golgotha was the figure of the Lamb of God going to be judged, bearing the sin of all the people of the world.

2. The Cross of Golgotha was the judgment of God on sin

Jesus was crucified at Golgotha, that is, the place called the Place of a Skull. At that time, the cross was a shameful and painful death penalty handed down to those who had committed the most serious crimes.

Galatians 3:13 says that everyone who hangs on a tree is under a curse. That Jesus was hung on the Cross means that He received in our place the curse of sin that we had to receive. That the hands and feet of Jesus were pierced with nails and that He shed His blood was the event in which He received with His own body the judgment for the sin of mankind, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the baptism He received from John and the Cross are connected as one. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and He paid the price of that sin with His blood on the Cross. Because sin was transferred to Jesus, there was the judgment of the Cross, and because Jesus received that judgment, those who believe have been saved from sin and the curse.

3. That Jesus was crucified between two sinners was the fulfillment of prophecy

On the right and left of Jesus, two men were crucified with Him, and Jesus was in the center. The Gospel of Luke records these two men as evildoers. Jesus, who had no sin, was placed in the place of death together with criminals.

Isaiah 53:12 prophesied that the Savior *"was numbered with the transgressors."* With Jesus being crucified between two evildoers, this word was fulfilled exactly.

Jesus was not a sinner, but because He had borne the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He was numbered together with sinners. Jesus stood in the place of judgment where we had to stand, and He received in our place the condemnation and punishment that we had to receive.

Of the two evildoers, one reviled Jesus, but the other acknowledged his own sin and punishment and asked Jesus to remember him. Jesus promised him Paradise. This shows the fact that salvation is given to the one who acknowledges his own sin and believes in Jesus the Savior.

4. The placard that read *"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS"* testified of the true kingship of Jesus

Pilate put on the cross of Jesus a placard on which was written *"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."* The chief priests demanded that he not write *"The King of the Jews,"* but change it to "the one who called himself the King of the Jews." But Pilate answered, *"What I have written, I have written."*

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The Jewish leaders did not acknowledge Jesus as King, but Jesus is in fact the King of kings, who rules not only over Israel but over the whole universe. He is God, who created all things, and the Savior who saves His people from sin.

That placard was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, many people read that writing. The kingship of Jesus, written in many languages, became evidence showing that His salvation would not remain with one nation only, but would spread to the whole world.

Jesus is not a king who rules His people by force, but the King of love, who gave up His own life to save His people from sin and death. The Cross is not the place where the kingship of Jesus failed, but the place where the love and righteousness of the King who saves sinners were revealed.

5. That the soldiers divided the garments of Jesus was also fulfilled according to the prophecy of the Scripture

After the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided His garments into four parts. Because the tunic was woven from the top in one piece, they did not tear it, but cast lots for who would take it.

This did not happen by chance. In Psalm 22:18 it was prophesied, *"They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."* The soldiers did not know what prophecy they were fulfilling, but through their actions the word of the Scripture was fulfilled exactly.

The shame and suffering that Jesus underwent on the Cross were the process by which the plan of salvation that God had

spoken beforehand was accomplished. His bearing sin with the baptism He received from John, His being crucified, His being numbered with the transgressors, and even the dividing of His garments were all accomplished according to the word of God.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not base their assurance of salvation on their own feelings or religious experiences. They believe in the remission of sins on the basis of the work of salvation that God promised in the Scriptures and actually accomplished through Jesus.

6. Even in the pain of the Cross, Jesus cared for His mother

By the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Even in the situation where the disciples of Jesus had scattered in fear, these women and the disciple whom He loved remained by the cross.

Jesus said to His mother, *"Woman, behold your son!"* and to the disciple whom He loved, *"Behold your mother!"* From that time, that disciple took Mary to his own home.

Even in the midst of extreme pain, Jesus considered how His mother in the flesh would live from then on, and He entrusted her care to the disciple. Here the heart of Jesus, who loves and cares for His people to the end, is revealed.

Simeon had said to Mary long before that she would undergo a pain like a sword piercing her heart. Mary underwent deep sorrow as she watched her son Jesus hung on the Cross. But the Cross of Jesus was not a tragedy that ended in death, but the will of God that led to the salvation of mankind and the resurrection.

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7. The suffering of Jesus reveals the love of God toward sinners

Jesus was mocked and despised by the created beings He Himself had made, and He was crucified with His clothes stripped off. The King of kings stood in the place of sinners and received shame and suffering.

This shows how much Jesus loved us. Jesus did not say only with words that He loved sinners, but He bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and gave up even His own life on the Cross.

Isaiah 53 says that the righteous Servant of God will justify many and will Himself bear their iniquities. Because Jesus offered His own body as the eternal sacrificial offering of atonement, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have all their sins washed away and become holy people before God.

8. To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to accept that the Cross is my salvation

One cannot be saved by knowing the Cross of Jesus only as a tragic event that happened long ago. One must know because of whose sin Jesus was hung on the Cross, and how He had borne the sin of mankind before that.

Jesus had all the sin of mankind, including mine, transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. Then, bearing that sin, He went to Golgotha and was crucified and shed His blood, and so He received the judgment of sin in our place. By rising again from the dead, He overcame sin and death and became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

Those who believe this word with the heart do not try to wash away their sins with their own deeds or merits. They believe that Jesus perfectly accomplished the salvation of mankind with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and they accept that salvation as their own salvation.

Conclusion

John 19:17–27 is the word in which Jesus, bearing all the sin of mankind that He had taken upon Himself with the baptism He received from John, went to Golgotha and received the judgment of the Cross. With Jesus, who had no sin, being crucified between two evildoers, He was numbered with the transgressors, and with the soldiers dividing His garments and casting lots for His tunic, the prophecy of the Old Testament was fulfilled exactly.

The placard written on the cross, *"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS,"* testified that He is the true King even while people were rejecting Jesus. Jesus is not a king who demands sacrifice from His people, but the King of love, who gave up His own life to save His people.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe with the heart the fact that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin in our place on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again from the dead. The Cross of Jesus is not the failure of a sinner, but the fulfillment of the righteousness and love of God, who saved us from sin, the curse, and judgment.

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John 19:28–37—what does the word of Jesus, *"It is finished!"* mean in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

John 19:28–37 records that Jesus declared on the Cross, *"It is finished!"* and actually died, and that when a soldier pierced His side, blood and water came out. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and by shedding His blood on the Cross He received the judgment of that sin in our place. The word *"It is finished!"* is the declaration that He had perfectly paid the price of atonement to save sinners.

1. Jesus knew all the promises of the Scripture and fulfilled them

Verse 28 records that Jesus spoke *"knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."* The death of Jesus on the Cross was not a misfortune that happened suddenly, nor an event frustrated by the plans of men. It was the event in which the word of salvation that God had promised beforehand through the prophets of the Old Testament was fulfilled.

The birth of Jesus, the baptism He received from John, the suffering and death of the Cross, and the resurrection were all accomplished within the plan of salvation of God. Jesus knew everything that would happen to Him, and He fulfilled the word of the Scripture to the last moment.

Therefore, the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a faith that follows human feelings or guesses. It is the faith that accepts with the heart the salvation

that God promised in the Old Testament and actually accomplished through Jesus.

2. The word *"I thirst!"* also fulfilled the prophecy of the Old Testament

Jesus, shedding His blood on the Cross, said, *"I thirst!"* Because Jesus is the true God and at the same time came in the body of a man, He actually underwent the thirst and pain of the Cross.

In Psalm 69:21 it was prophesied, *"They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink."* That people put a sponge filled with sour wine on hyssop and put it to the mouth of Jesus was the exact fulfillment of this word.

Even in extreme pain, Jesus fulfilled the promises of the Scripture without leaving out a single one. This testifies that Jesus is the promised Christ, and that the salvation He accomplished is the true salvation based on the word of God.

3. *"It is finished!"* is the declaration that He had fully borne the judgment of sin

After Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, *"It is finished!"* This word does not mean merely that Jesus had ended His life in the flesh. It means that He had fully accomplished the work of atonement that He came to this earth and carried out in order to remove all the sin of mankind.

Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. Bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, and so He paid the price of sin in full. Jesus received in our place the

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condemnation, the curse, and the death that sinners had to receive.

Therefore, the word *"It is finished!"* carries the following meanings.

— He bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John.

— He received on the Cross, in our place, the judgment for all the sin He had borne.

— He fully paid, with His own blood, the price of death, which is the wages of sin.

— He perfectly established the way by which those who believe can receive the remission of sins and eternal life.

After the Cross, Jesus overcame sin and death by rising again from the dead, and He revealed the fact that the salvation He accomplished is perfect.

4. Jesus gave up His own life of Himself

After Jesus had said, *"It is finished!"* He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. His death was not a death He suffered helplessly because His strength had run out.

Jesus had said earlier that no one takes His life from Him, but that He lays it down of Himself, and that He also has the power to take it again. After Jesus had borne the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He gave up His own life as the sacrificial offering of atonement in order to be judged for that sin.

Jesus was the Son of God, who had no sin, but He died in order to save sinners. By giving up His own life, He paid the price of sin and saved those who believe from eternal judgment. This is the righteousness and love of God revealed on the Cross.

5. That the bones of Jesus were not broken fulfilled the prophecy of the Passover lamb

The Jews, not wanting the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath, asked Pilate to break the legs of the prisoners and take the bodies away. The soldiers broke the legs of the two men who had been crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that He was already dead, and they did not break His legs.

Exodus 12:46 says not to break the bones of the Passover lamb. In Numbers 9:12 also it is recorded not to break one of the bones of the Passover lamb. That the bones of Jesus were not broken shows that He is the true Passover Lamb who bore the sin of mankind and died.

The people of Israel escaped the judgment of death by putting the blood of the Passover lamb on the lintel and the two doorposts. In the same way, Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and shed His blood on the Cross, and so He saved those who believe from the judgment of sin and eternal death.

Even the fact that the legs of Jesus were not broken was fulfilled according to the word of God. This testifies that Jesus is the true Savior to whom the Passover lamb of the Old Testament pointed.

6. The blood and water that came out of the side of Jesus testify of His actual death

One of the soldiers pierced the side of Jesus with a spear, and blood and water came out from there. This testifies that Jesus actually died on the Cross. Jesus did not faint for a while and

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then wake up; He fully received the judgment of death for the sin of mankind.

The reason the actual death of Jesus is important is that the price of sin is death. Even though Jesus had borne sin with the baptism He received from John, if He had not died on the Cross, the judgment of sin could not have been completed. By shedding His blood and actually dying, Jesus paid the price of sin in full.

His death shows how great the love of God toward sinners is, and at the same time how severe the judgment of God on sin is. God did not leave sin as it was; He made His Son bear that sin and judged it on the Cross.

7. The blood and water testify of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The blood and water that came out of the side of Jesus testify that He actually died, and at the same time clearly show the salvation that Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood. 1 John chapter 5 says that Jesus Christ came by water and blood, and that the Spirit, the water, and the blood testify as one.

Here, the water is connected with the work in which Jesus bore the sin of mankind through the baptism He received from John. The blood signifies the work in which Jesus received the judgment of that sin on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation of the water and the blood that Jesus accomplished is the true salvation of God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplishes one perfect salvation as follows.

— Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John.

— By shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He

received the judgment of that sin in our place.

— By rising again from the dead, He overcame the power of sin and death.

— The Holy Spirit testifies in the hearts of those who believe that this word of salvation is the truth.

Therefore, if the water and the blood are separated, the salvation of Jesus cannot be fully understood. The baptism He received from John is the work in which He bore sin, and the blood of the Cross is the work in which He paid the price of that sin.

8. The Apostle John testified directly so that we might believe this salvation

Verse 35 says that he who saw this scene has testified, and that his testimony is true. The Apostle John saw with his own eyes, by the cross of Jesus, His death and the blood and water that came out of His side. And he recorded it so that people might believe this fact.

The salvation of Christianity is not a philosophy that people made up, nor a religious imagination. It is the historical salvation in which the Son of God actually came in the body of a man, bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, actually shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again.

John testified of what he had witnessed, and the Holy Spirit testifies through that written word that the salvation of Jesus is the truth. We did not see the Cross of Jesus directly with our own eyes, but we receive the remission of sins by believing with the heart the testimony recorded in the Scriptures.

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9. That He was pierced with a spear was also fulfilled according to the prophecy of the Scripture

That the side of Jesus was pierced with a spear fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 12:10. God said that people would look on *"Me whom they pierced"* and mourn.

It was because of the sin of mankind, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John, that Jesus, who had no sin, was pierced. The sin that caused Jesus to be pierced was our very sin, and Jesus received the judgment of that sin with His own body.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not merely grieve emotionally as they look on Jesus, who was hung on the Cross and pierced. They believe that Jesus has already borne all the sin of mankind and received the judgment of that sin in our place. And giving thanks for the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished, they serve Him as their Savior and God.

Conclusion

John 19:28–37 testifies that Jesus fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament without leaving out a single one, and that He perfectly paid the price of atonement for the sin of mankind. The word *"I thirst!"* and His receiving the sour wine, His bones not being broken, and even His being pierced with a spear were all fulfilled according to the prophecy of the Scripture.

That Jesus declared, *"It is finished!"* means that He had fully received on the Cross the judgment for all the sin of mankind, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John. Jesus paid the price of sin with His own blood and life, and by

rising again from the dead He became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

The blood and water that came out of the side of Jesus testify that He actually died, and at the same time show the salvation that Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and He received the judgment of that sin with the blood of the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies that this gospel is the truth.

Therefore, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not try to accomplish the remission of sins with their own deeds. They believe with the heart the perfect salvation that Jesus declared with the words *"It is finished!"* With this faith, they have all their sins washed away, are saved from the judgment of sin, and become the children of God.

John 19:38–42—what does the burial of Jesus by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus show?

John 19:38–42 records that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus and buried it. That Jesus was buried in a new tomb testifies that He actually died on the Cross, and it is the process that leads to the resurrection prophesied in the Scriptures. It also shows two disciples who had been hiding revealing their faith through action at the most dangerous and most necessary moment.

1. Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Jesus, but he had been hiding his faith

Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Jesus, but he had been

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hiding that fact for fear of the Jews. According to the parallel passages, he was a rich man and a prominent council member, and a good and just man who was waiting for the kingdom of God. Also, he had not consented to the council's decision to kill Jesus and to what they did.

But Joseph, conscious of the position he held in Jewish society and of the eyes of the people, could not openly reveal that he was a disciple of Jesus. It was because, though he had a heart that believed in Jesus, if he revealed that faith he could be put out of the council or lose his social position.

This shows the weakness of man, who is torn between the glory of men and the glory of God. Even if one has faith, if one fears people, one may not be able to testify of Jesus openly. But after he had seen the Cross and death of Jesus, the faith of Joseph was no longer hidden.

2. Joseph revealed his faith through action at the most necessary moment

After Jesus died on the Cross, many disciples scattered in fear. Just then, Joseph of Arimathea went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. The Gospel of Mark records that he went in to Pilate *"taking courage."*

To ask for the body of a man who had been crucified was an act that openly revealed that he himself was also a disciple of that man. Joseph no longer hid himself for fear of the Jewish leaders and the eyes of the people. At the moment when Jesus had suffered the most humiliating death, he sided with Him and took His body.

It was not the action of Joseph that saved him. Because he believed in Jesus, he was able to take the risk and offer himself.

True faith does not remain only in the heart; when the Lord and the gospel must be served, it is revealed through action.

3. The faith of Nicodemus was also revealed more and more clearly

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, who had come to Jesus by night in John chapter 3. He came to Jesus avoiding the eyes of the people, and he heard from Jesus the word that one must be born again of water and the Spirit.

In John chapter 7, Nicodemus asked the other Jewish leaders whether it was right to judge a man before hearing him and knowing what he was doing. He did not yet say openly that he was a disciple of Jesus, but before those who were trying to condemn Jesus unjustly, he demanded a right trial.

Now, after Jesus had died, Nicodemus came out bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. He no longer remained the man who had come to Jesus alone by night. He prepared many spices for the burial of Jesus and, together with Joseph, wrapped His body in linen cloths. The word he had heard from Jesus and his faith toward Him were revealed in actual service.

4. Joseph and Nicodemus were not ashamed of the death of Jesus

At that time, the cross was the most shameful punishment of death. People condemned Jesus as a sinner and a rebel, and the Jewish leaders treated Him like a man cursed by God.

But Joseph and Nicodemus did not turn away from the body

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of Jesus. They took the body of Jesus that had been taken down from the cross, carefully applied the spices, and wrapped it in linen cloths. At the moment when the world had abandoned Jesus, these two men served Him as their Lord.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not judge Jesus by the evaluation of the world either. They believe that Jesus suffered shame and death on the Cross not because He had no strength or because He had sin, but in order to be judged for all the sin of mankind, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John.

5. The burial of Jesus testifies that He actually died

Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus down from the cross and, according to the burial custom of the Jews, wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices. Then they laid Jesus in a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried.

This clearly shows that Jesus actually died on the Cross. The earlier part of John chapter 19 testifies that when a soldier confirmed the death of Jesus and pierced His side with a spear, blood and water came out. Following that, Joseph and Nicodemus took the body, carried out the burial, and laid it in the tomb.

The death of Jesus was not a state of fainting or losing consciousness for a while. Jesus fully received the judgment of death for all the sin of mankind, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John. His burial is the evidence that He actually bore death, which is the wages of sin.

6. With His burial in the new tomb of a rich man, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled

The place where Jesus was buried was a new tomb that no one had yet used. The Gospel of Matthew records that the tomb was the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, which he had hewn out of the rock for himself. Joseph was a rich man, and he gave to Jesus the tomb he had prepared for himself.

In Isaiah 53:9 it was prophesied that the Savior had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth, but that His grave would be *"with the rich at His death."* Jesus, who had no sin, was crucified together with criminals, but after He died, He was buried in the new tomb of Joseph, a rich man, and so this word was fulfilled exactly.

Even the burial of Jesus was accomplished according to the plan of salvation of God and the prophecy of the Scriptures. This testifies that the Cross, the burial, and the resurrection were not accidental events, but the work that God had established beforehand and accomplished in order to save sinners.

7. The new tomb became the place that clearly testifies of the resurrection of Jesus

The fact that Jesus was buried in a new tomb that no one had used is important for testifying of the resurrection that would take place afterward. In that tomb there was no body of anyone else besides Jesus. Therefore, when the tomb was empty, there could be no confusion as to who had risen.

The Gospels of Matthew and Mark record that after Joseph had laid Jesus in the tomb, he rolled a large stone and blocked the door of the tomb. The women who had followed Jesus also

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saw with their own eyes in which tomb the body of Jesus was laid. The place of the burial of Jesus was clear, and several people confirmed it.

Jesus died for the sin of mankind according to the Scriptures and was buried, and He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. The burial is the actual event that connects the death of the Cross with the resurrection. Because Jesus actually died and entered the tomb, the event of His rising again from that tomb becomes a true resurrection.

8. The burial of Jesus is connected with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

When we look at the burial of Jesus through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the flow of salvation appears clearly.

— Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John.

— By being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, He received the judgment of that sin in our place.

— With His body being wrapped in linen cloths and buried in a new tomb, it was confirmed that He had actually died.

— By rising again from the dead, He overcame the power of sin and death and became the eternal Savior.

The burial of Jesus shows that the judgment for our sins was completely carried out. Jesus died while bearing all the sin of mankind, and He entered the tomb. Then, by rising again from the dead on the third day, He gave new life and the hope of resurrection to those who believe.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus were all accomplished for their own salvation. Because Jesus died in the

place of mankind for its sin, those who believe are saved from the judgment of sin, and because Jesus rose again, those who believe also obtain eternal life.

9. Those who have been saved must live revealing their faith, like Joseph and Nicodemus

Joseph and Nicodemus at first hid their faith for fear of people, but at the moment when the burial of Jesus was needed, they offered the position and possessions they had and served the Lord. They appeared at the time when the other disciples had scattered, and they stood on the side of Jesus to the end.

The life of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also be like this. It is not that they try to obtain salvation by their own deeds, but that, because they believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished, they serve the Lord and the gospel with thanksgiving.

We are weak and may sometimes fear the eyes of people. But if we believe the fact that Jesus saved us with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, we must not be ashamed of that faith, but must testify of the gospel and serve the work the Lord has entrusted to us. The faith of the saved is revealed in a life that chooses the Lord and the gospel at the most necessary moment.

Conclusion

John 19:38–42 shows the fact that Jesus actually died and was buried, and the faith of the hidden disciples Joseph of

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Arimathea and Nicodemus revealed through action.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross He received the judgment of that sin in our place. Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus, wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, and laid it in the new tomb of a rich man. Thereby the fact that Jesus actually died, and the prophecy of Isaiah that His grave would be with the rich, were fulfilled.

The burial of Jesus does not mean that everything ended with death. Jesus was buried and rose again on the third day, and so He overcame the power of sin and death. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe that all these works were accomplished for their own salvation, and they receive the remission of sins and eternal life.

Also, those who believe this gospel, like Joseph and Nicodemus, must not be ashamed of Jesus, but must live a life of serving the Lord and the gospel by using the position, possessions, and strength given to them. ✉

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 19

[Question] 1. Through what process did Jesus Christ undergo His suffering, and what meaning does that suffering have?

Pilate declared again and again that he had found no fault in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, when the Jewish leaders and the crowd demanded crucifixion, he had Jesus scourged and handed Him over to be crucified. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus and put a purple robe on Him, and then they mocked Him as the King of the Jews and struck Him.

Jesus carried His own cross to Golgotha and was crucified between two prisoners. On the cross a placard was put up that read *"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS,"* and the soldiers divided His garments and cast lots for His tunic. After Jesus had entrusted His mother to the disciple whom He loved, He said, *"I thirst!"* and at last He said, *"It is finished!"* and died. The soldiers did not break the legs of Jesus, who had already died, but pierced His side with a spear, and blood and water came out from there. Afterward, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrapped His body in linen cloths and buried it in a new tomb in a garden.

The suffering of Jesus was not a defeat that He underwent for lack of strength. Jesus was the Son of God, who has no sin, and the King of kings, but in order to save His people from sin, He accepted shame, punishment, and death of His own will. Because He had borne the sin of mankind in His own body through the

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baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for that sin in our place on the Cross. This was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah that He would bear the transgressions of sinners and be silent like a lamb led to the slaughter.

The word *"It is finished!"* means that He paid in full the price that had to be paid to save sinners, and that He completed the salvation and love of God. The blood and water that came out of His side testify that His bearing sin with the baptism He received from John and His receiving the judgment of that sin with the blood of the Cross accomplished one perfect salvation. That His bones were not broken and that He was pierced with a spear were also all fulfilled according to the promise of the Scripture.

Therefore, the suffering of Christ is not simply an event in which one righteous man died unjustly. It is the event of salvation in which the King who had no sin stood in the place of sinners, bore the shame, curse, and death that we were to receive, and reconciled God and us. The tearing of the veil of the temple, recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, shows that through this salvation the way to come to God was opened.

[Question] 2. What kind of disposition and attitude did each of the figures who appear in the event of the Cross of Jesus Christ show?

The people who appear in the event of the Cross reveal, each through their own words and actions, what they believed and what they chose before Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus Christ

Jesus had no sin, yet He did not try to defend Himself and escape punishment. This was not because He was helpless or had

been defeated, but in order to be judged on the Cross for the sin of mankind, which He had borne with the baptism He received from John. In order to fulfill the will of the Father and the promise of the Scripture, He accepted His suffering silently, like a sheep before its shearers.

Even in the midst of extreme pain, He entrusted His mother to the disciple whom He loved, and He prayed for those who were killing Him. At the last, He declared, *"It is finished!"* Jesus is the King of love, who gave even His own life to complete salvation, and the Savior who obeyed the will of the Father to the end.

2. Pilate

Pilate found no fault in Jesus, and he tried several times to release Him. When he heard the words that Jesus was the Son of God, he was even afraid. He did have the reason and conscience to discern the fact that Jesus was innocent.

But when the Jews pressed him, saying, *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend,"* he gave up justice in order to protect his own position and safety. Pilate, who handed Jesus over to be crucified even though he knew that He was innocent, is a weak and political figure who knew the truth yet could not follow it for fear of loss. He wrote *"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS"* and put it on the cross, but he himself did not believe in and receive that King.

3. The chief priests and the Jewish leaders

The chief priests and the Jewish leaders put forward the law of God and their religion, but they did not receive as their King the Son whom God had sent. They declared, *"We have no king but Caesar!"* and demanded that Jesus be done away with. While claiming to serve God, they opposed the true King and

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Savior who was right before their eyes.

Even though the innocence of Jesus had been declared again and again, they pressed for crucifixion, and they threatened Pilate politically, saying that if he released Jesus he would not be loyal to Caesar. In their conduct appear the stubbornness and spiritual blindness that reject the truth in order to protect their religious authority and their own position.

4. The soldiers

The soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus and put a purple robe on Him, and then they mocked Him as the King of the Jews and struck Him. After they had crucified Him, they divided the garments of Jesus and cast lots to get His tunic. They were so cruel and insensitive that even in the face of the pain and death of a man, they thought first of their own gain.

But through their actions the Scripture that they would divide His garments and cast lots was fulfilled. Their act of not breaking the legs of Jesus but piercing His side with a spear also testified of His actual death and of the salvation of the blood and water, and so fulfilled the Scripture. They did not know what they were doing, but within the plan of salvation of God they became instruments that fulfilled prophecy.

5. Simon of Cyrene

Simon of Cyrene, who appears in the parallel accounts, was seized by the soldiers and made to carry the cross of Jesus in His place. He had not volunteered from the beginning, but he carried the cross given to him and followed Jesus. He is a figure who unexpectedly took part in the event of salvation and followed behind the Lord. This shows that even a task one was at first forced to take on can be used preciously in the work of the Lord when one obeys and follows.

6. The two evildoers crucified with Jesus

The two evildoers were hung on crosses in the same way, but their attitudes toward Jesus were completely opposite. One of them blasphemed Him, saying, *"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."* Even facing death, he did not look back on his own sins, but mocked Jesus.

The other evildoer acknowledged that the punishment he was receiving was deserved, and he confessed that there was nothing wrong in what Jesus had done. He also believed in the kingdom of Jesus and pleaded with Him to remember him. He is a man who, at the last moment, acknowledged his own sin and the righteousness of Jesus and believed in the Savior. Even beside the same cross, one man showed stubborn unbelief, and the other showed a faith that feared God.

7. The women by the cross and the disciple whom He loved

The mother of Jesus, several women, and the disciple whom He loved stayed by the cross even when the others had scattered and Jesus was suffering the most shameful death. In their conduct appear not only sorrow but also love and loyalty that did not abandon Jesus.

The disciple whom He loved received the request of Jesus and from that time took Mary to his own home. He also saw with his own eyes the blood and water coming out of the side of Jesus and testified of that fact. He was a responsible witness who received the word of the Lord and actually obeyed it, and who made known the fact of salvation that he had seen.

8. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus

Joseph of Arimathea had originally been hiding the fact that he was a disciple of Jesus, for fear of the Jews. Nicodemus, too, was at first a man who had come to Jesus by night. Neither of

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the two showed bold faith openly from the beginning.

But after Jesus died, their attitude changed. Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, and Nicodemus brought a great amount of myrrh and aloes. The two men wrapped the body of Jesus in linen cloths and buried it in a new tomb. At a time when people condemned Jesus as a sinner and despised even those connected with Him, they used their own position and wealth to serve the Lord. They are people who revealed their hidden faith through concrete action at the last moment.

9. The centurion and the crowd that had gathered to watch

In the parallel account, when the centurion saw the death of Jesus and the things that happened at that time, he glorified God and confessed, *"Certainly this was a righteous Man!"* He was on the side that carried out the execution, but after he saw that sight, he acknowledged the righteousness of Jesus.

The crowd that had gathered to watch at first looked at the event of the Cross as if it were a spectacle, but after they had seen everything, they beat their breasts and returned. This shows people who, though belatedly, realized before the Cross the gravity and fearfulness of what they had done.

In the end, the event of the Cross clearly divided the hearts of people. There were those who knew Jesus yet chose their own position, and there were also those who put forward their religion yet opposed the true King. There were those who mocked the suffering Jesus, but there were also those who stayed by His side to the end, those who acknowledged their own sin and believed in Him, and those who revealed their hidden faith through action. The Cross is an event that reveals the love and salvation of Jesus Christ and, at the same time, reveals what the heart and faith of each person standing before Him were like.

[Question] 3. Arrange in a table, in order, the places Jesus passed through and the main events from the time He entered Jerusalem until He died on the Cross.

The places Jesus passed through and the main events from the time He entered Jerusalem until He was crucified and died at Golgotha are as follows.

No.	Place and movement	Main events	Related passages
1	From near Bethany and Bethphage to Jerusalem	Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a young donkey, and the crowd, holding palm branches, welcomed Him as the King of Israel.	John 12:1, 12–15
2	The temple in Jerusalem	Jesus taught in the temple, likened Himself to a grain of wheat that dies and produces much grain, and spoke beforehand of the death He would undergo.	John 12:20–36
3	The Passover supper inside the city of Jerusalem	He washed the feet of the disciples, made known the betrayal of Judas Iscariot, gave the disciples His last teaching, and then prayed to God the Father.	John chapters 13–17

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No.	Place and movement	Main events	Related passages
4	Across the Brook Kidron to the garden	This is the place the Synoptic Gospels call Gethsemane. After Jesus had prayed, He was arrested of His own will by the troops and officers that Judas Iscariot had brought.	John 18:1–12; Matthew 26:36–56
5	The house of Annas	Jesus was first led away to Annas, the former high priest, and was questioned and insulted.	John 18:12–23
6	The house of Caiaphas the high priest	Jesus was sent to Caiaphas, and meanwhile Peter denied Jesus three times in the courtyard.	John 18:24–27
7	The Praetorium of Pilate	The Jewish leaders handed Jesus over to Pilate. After Pilate had questioned Jesus, he declared that he found no fault in Him.	John 18:28–40
8	The residence of Herod	According to the Gospel of Luke, Pilate sent Jesus, a Galilean, to Herod, and Herod mocked Him and then sent Him back to Pilate.	Luke 23:6–12

No.	Place and movement	Main events	Related passages
9	Back to the Praetorium of Pilate	Pilate had Jesus scourged, and the soldiers mocked Him with the crown of thorns and the purple robe.	John 19:1–5
10	The judgment seat at The Pavement, that is, Gabbatha	Pilate set Jesus before the Jews and in the end handed Him over to be crucified.	John 19:13–16
11	The road to Golgotha	Jesus at first carried His own cross, and according to the Synoptic Gospels, on the way Simon of Cyrene carried the cross in His place and followed.	John 19:17; Luke 23:26
12	Golgotha	Jesus was crucified between two evildoers. After all things had been accomplished, He said, *"It is finished!"* and gave up His spirit.	John 19:17–30

This course was not a road along which Jesus was dragged by people for lack of strength. Although Jesus knew everything He would undergo, He received the cup the Father had given Him. Because He had borne all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, He went all the way to the Cross

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in order to receive the judgment for that sin. Therefore, the course from the entry into Jerusalem to Golgotha is the road on which Jesus, who came as King, became the sacrificial offering of atonement, saved His people from sin and judgment, and completed the work of salvation of God.

[Question] 4. What kind of punishment was the scourging that Jesus Christ received by the order of Pilate in John 19:1?

John 19:1 records, *"So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him."* This scourge was not a switch for lightly striking a person, but a fearful instrument of punishment used on those condemned to death. At the ends of the whip, made of leather, were pieces of metal shaped like fishhooks, so that when it struck, the whip wrapped around the body, and when it was pulled back, the iron hooks dug into the flesh and tore the skin. It was a cruel punishment in which, with each blow of the whip, the whole body was torn to shreds and covered with blood.

Jesus received thirty-nine blows of this scourge, forty minus one. After He had already suffered pain severe enough to leave Him half dead from the scourging alone, He wore the crown of thorns, was mocked and spat upon, and at last was crucified.

But that Jesus was struck with the scourge does not mean simply an event in which He suffered pain through an unjust trial. Jesus, who had no sin, bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and He received in our place the punishment for that sin. Isaiah 53:5 says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed."*

Therefore, the scourge that Christ was struck with was a leather whip that tore the flesh of those condemned to death, and that scourging shows the fact that Jesus Himself bore the judgment we had to receive because of our transgressions and iniquities. Bearing the sin of the world that He had taken upon Himself at the Jordan River, Jesus received the punishment of the scourge and the Cross, and so He gave us the remission of sins and peace. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The suffering, shame, and death of Jesus are His love toward us

< John 19:1-6 >

"So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, 'Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.' Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, 'Behold the Man!' Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.'"

The anguish of Pilate

I would like to share the word about the anguish of Pilate, and about what the suffering the Lord underwent has to do with us. When we look at the Bible, Pilate, who was the Roman governor, had many worries and was afraid and had a hard time as he tried Jesus. However much Pilate questioned Him, read through the whole written accusation, and listened to Him

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directly, as far as he could see, Jesus had no sin at all. There was nothing specific about what sin He had committed. The only reasons given were things like: He is the King of the Jews, He came from heaven, He is the Son of God. Pilate was a governor who had come from a foreign nation and was ruling the whole country for the time being, but there was no charge against Jesus. When he met Jesus face to face and talked with Him, He was not a criminal, nor was He someone who would commit a sin, nor was He an ordinary man; He was of a somewhat different kind from himself, but he could not find any fault in Him at all. So, because he could not pass a verdict that He was a sinner, he tried to release Him if he possibly could. He tried hard to release Him, saying, "You have brought an accusation, but I cannot find any charge."

Pilate asked, "Those people accuse You of being the King of the Jews; are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36)*, and when Pilate asked, *"Are You a king then?"* He said, *"You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth" (John 18:37)*. The more Pilate listened, the stranger it all was to him. He himself had learning and the ability to judge, but what truth was, what the King of the Jews was—they accused Him of being the King of the Jews, and He was not even their king, yet He said He was a king—he could not make sense of it. When he said, "If You say You are a king, are those people not accusing You? Is it not Your own people who accuse You?" Jesus said that those people were not His people and that His kingdom was not of this world. Hearing those words, Pilate was greatly troubled.

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But when we look at the Bible, before Pilate handed down the death sentence, his wife had a dream. She sent word to her husband, saying, *"Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him" (Matthew 27:19)*. It seems that God had taught her everything—that this Man was no ordinary man, and that if her husband handled this wrongly, a disaster would follow. Even without that, Pilate was troubled about this and troubled about that, and however much he listened, he could not make sense of it, and while he was in this anguish, the Jews said, *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend" (John 19:12)*. At that time the Roman emperor was Caesar, and they were saying that as a subject of Caesar, he must not simply release a man said to be the King of the Jews. So, having no other way, he handed down the death sentence.

"Behold the Man!"

Pilate branded Jesus a sinner and handed Him over to the soldiers. The soldiers took Jesus away and struck Him with a scourge. The scourge was made of leather, and its ends were shaped like fishhooks. When it struck, the whip wrapped around the whole body, and when it was pulled, the hooks at the ends dug into the flesh and tore the flesh. Blood flowed from the blows of the scourge, and at the end the pain of the flesh being torn was what made it so hard to bear. When the death sentence was handed down, first they struck Him with the scourge; next, since a prisoner had to wear prison clothes, they stripped off His clothes; and since the charge was that He was the King of the Jews, they said a king must wear a crown, and they put a crown made of thorns on His head and pressed it down hard. Blood

burst out. Then they spat on Him, struck Him on the cheeks, and mocked Him.

Even after Pilate had handed down his verdict, it seemed to him that his verdict was very wrong. So, trying to win the Jews over again and make them turn back, he said, *"Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him" (John 19:4)*. What he meant was that even though he had handed Him over to them as a sinner, when he thought about it again, it seemed that he had judged wrongly. Jesus came out, and because He had already been sentenced, He was wearing the crown of thorns on His head and His whole body was covered with blood. Pilate said, *"Behold the Man!" (John 19:5)*. What he meant was this: however much I think about it, even now that I have handed down the verdict and think about it, it seems I have done wrong; I cannot find any fault in Him, so what do you think? Then the people shouted, *"Crucify Him, crucify Him!" (John 19:6)*. The crowd demanded point-blank that He be hung on a cross and killed. Pilate, unable to withstand the threats of the crowd, said, *"You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him" (John 19:6)*. Then the Jews said, in effect, "Even according to our law, that Man must die, but because our sovereignty has been taken from us, we have no right to hand down and carry out a death sentence, so you do it in our place."

Pilate's wife had told him that he must not judge Jesus wrongly; when he himself had talked with Him he had found no fault; and even after handing down the verdict, he had come out again in the middle and said that he could not find any fault at all and wanted to release Him—but they said no, crucify Him, and so there was nothing he could do. In that anguish, Pilate said to Jesus, *"Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" (John 19:10)*. What he meant was this: depending on what I say, You can be set free or You can be

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put to death, so if You feel wronged, speak to me. But Jesus gave no answer at all. Pilate tried hard to release Him, but in the end, pushed by the shouting and threats of the crowd, he handed Him over to the Cross. That was the anguish of Pilate. According to tradition, after Jesus died, Pilate washed his hands until the day he died, saying, "I am innocent; I knew that He had no sin," and, troubled by the words He had spoken, that He was the Son of God and that His kingdom was not of this world, he died miserably in a sense of guilt.

What Jesus has to do with me

Then, people took Jesus and scourged Him, put a crown of thorns on Him, spat on Him, and nailed Him to the Cross and killed Him—but what does this Jesus have to do with us? Honestly, I am thankful that He bore our sins, and I am thankful that He came to save us. What is there not to be thankful for? But when it is said that Jesus was sacrificed because of us, if we think of it in fleshly terms, it does not feel very real. What does this person Jesus have to do with us? We do not even know Jesus well, and yet we are told that He did all that for us, so in some ways it is even burdensome. That He did that for me when He did not even know me is burdensome when we think of it in human terms. Of course, it is said that He did it for us, but even granting that having our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John involved no pain, when we think of it with the feelings of the flesh, is it not burdensome that He wore the crown of thorns, shed blood, was struck with the scourge, was struck on the cheeks, had His whole body covered with blood, carried the cross, had nails driven through both hands and both feet, and poured out all the blood of His heart? If it was for

us, is that not too much? When Passion Week comes around, I am thankful in a fleshly way, thankful indeed, but I cannot say there is not a quiet sense of burden. However much I think about it in fleshly terms, I cannot understand what He has to do with us. So we must see what this word is telling us.

Pilate could not even find any fault, but because the Jews wanted it, he crucified Him. Why did Jesus not resist, why did He not defend Himself, but was crucified? If He was the Son of God, He could even have called down the angels. Before Jesus underwent this, while He was praying on the Mount of Olives, the Roman soldiers came looking for Him at night with spears and torches, together with the disciple Judas and the officers of the high priest. When they said whom they were seeking, Jesus said, *"I am He" (John 18:5)*, and at that one word, *"they drew back and fell to the ground" (John 18:6)*. That shows that Jesus, as God, could have wiped them out on the spot with a single breath. But He did not do so; when they fell down and got up again and asked who He was, He said, in effect, "Arrest Me, and let all those around Me go; then I will go along quietly." When we look at that, Jesus is the One who walked on the water, calmed the storm, and, when He told the dead to rise, made them rise; He is the Creator, the Lord of life, the Judge, the LORD of hosts who has all power, the omniscient and omnipotent God who made all things and governs, rules, saves, and judges them.

When Pilate met Jesus, that was what troubled him. He thought, in effect, "If Jesus really is the Son of God, what will become of me? Am I not doing a great wrong? To put it crudely, am I not going to be ruined?" In the end, because he could not hold back the crowd, Jesus was pierced, wore the crown of thorns and the purple robe, was struck on the cheeks, and was spat upon.

How shameful a thing this is! Shame is worse than death.

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Dying is over once one dies, but shame cannot be endured. When people feel shame, they sometimes throw away their own lives or take revenge. Because people are by nature precious beings, made in the image of God, when they are put to shame, a fire rises up inside them. How shameful a thing this is! Jesus was rejected by the Jews and by many people, who were His created beings, and everywhere He went, people opposed Him and tried to kill Him. That Jesus underwent this is burdensome to our flesh. But why did He do this for us?

The name Jesus, *"He will save His people from their sins"*

The Bible tells us this. *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins'" (Matthew 1:18–21)*. This is the very meaning of the name Jesus. The word Jesus means 'Savior.' The reason Jesus suffered, was despised, was put to shame, was in pain, and made such a great sacrifice for us was that He wanted to save His people from their sins.

Who are His people? It says, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*, but what is the truth? Those who believe that Jesus is God and the Creator, that Jesus

came to this earth in obedience to the will of the Father, that Jesus became our Savior with the gospel of the water and the Spirit by having our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, dying on the Cross, and rising again, that He was sacrificed and paid the price of our sins and saved His people fully from sin, and that this is what He did for you and me—these are the ones who believe in the truth. We believe that Jesus is the truth. We believe that Jesus is God and the Creator, that He came as our Savior and, for our sins, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so removed our sins and saved us. It means that He underwent this suffering for His people who believe this truth. There is no other reason.

There are many people who say that, though they did not want it, they were born sinners from birth, and that in some ways it is so shameful and shabby that they do not know why they were born into this world, and that it would have been better if they had not been born at all. But when we come to know the truth, God had us born in order to make us precious beings, to make us the people of God, and to give us blessings. It is completely different from what we think. The reason the Lord was sacrificed for us to the point of being burdensome is that, in order to save us from sin, He made us His people, and so He was sacrificed for those who believe in the truth.

Not with a burden, but with thanksgiving…

Then the matter is different. It is not burdensome. If we say, "God, You did this because You had Your own will," it is not burdensome. If we think of it in fleshly terms, when someone says he will die for me, I am thankful, thankful indeed, but I end up saying, "Do not do that; I would rather die for my own sins;

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is it not a bit much for you to die because of me?" But because He is not a human being but the Creator and the Savior, He underwent such sacrifice and suffering in order to save His people from their sins. If we say that God did this for us because He wanted to, and that He did this in order to make us His people and clothe us in glory as the people of God, take us to heaven and let us live blessed forever and praise God, then it is not burdensome. If that was His will, and if He did not die and simply end there, but rose again and reigns forever, receiving praise from us, and gives us His riches and glory so that we too may enjoy riches and glory together with Him, then we can only be thankful. Then the sense of burden is lifted.

I really had a great sense of burden. I am thankful for what He did for me, but I do not often preach those sermons about Jesus dying on the Cross. It is because it is too burdensome. People of the world say "the Cross, the Cross" at every turn, but how shameful, how painful, how agonizing a thing it is! That He did that for me is something I am thankful for, thankful indeed, but unless one has the heart of a thief, it is burdensome. I feel that it would be better for me to go to hell—why did He do that for me? Would it not be enough just to finish me off, one person? But He could not abandon us. We did not become sinners because we wanted to, and there is nothing that came about because we wanted it. From the time God made you and me, from the time we were born into this world through our parents, everything came about under the permission of God. When we were in pain and hardship because of sin, we believed because we were thankful that Jesus Christ had done this for us, and after we believed, because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, we felt that it was fitting for Him to suffer, and we were thankful and grateful. But when we thought of His being hung on the Cross in fleshly terms, it was

burdensome. Yet because He says that He wanted to save us from sin, and because we have accepted that truth and that fact in our hearts, it is not burdensome. Because it is an act of love, we find ourselves thinking, how much He must have loved us to do that. Rather, we are thankful. When we see it with faith, it is something to be thankful for.

So let us lighten the fleshly burden. The Lord did not do this because we wanted it or because we did something in some way; He did it because He loves you and me, and so it is not burdensome. If He had died and could not rise again, it would be burdensome, but if He showed us such love, gave us blessings, received praise from us, and did such a blessed thing because He wanted to live a glorious life together with those He loves, then it is not burdensome for us. We can accept it, and we must receive it. Because Jesus loves you and loves me, He underwent this suffering and sacrifice. He did so because He loves us, in order to save us, because He has the power, and because we are His people. And on the last day He says to the adversary, in effect, "I loved these people and clothed them in glory, made them My people, and let them live with Me in heaven. Adversary, can you overcome Me by force?" This is the purpose of God. *"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Romans 11:36)*. Everything was begun by God, was accomplished by God, and is completed by God.

How thankful a thing this is! Then we must also lighten our sense of burden. In fact, I had a very great sense of burden. It is all right for someone to be fond of me and like me, but if someone says he will die for me, it is burdensome. It is because, in fleshly terms, I am a person of no such worth. But because He made me one of His people, and in order to save me from all my sins had my sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, and died and was sacrificed because of those sins, I

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am thankful. With thanksgiving, I can receive His heart and His love. I believe that you too will receive it in your hearts in this way.

The love of Jesus, who endured humiliation and sacrifice

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Jesus is the truth. He is true. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. Jesus is the truth, and that Jesus did this work is also true. He was sacrificed for you and me; the suffering we were to undergo in hell, He underwent in our place by having our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John. The shame, pain, and curse that we would undergo after going into hell, Jesus underwent entirely, though for a short time. He, whose standing is high and who is noble, was put to shame by His created beings. Does Jesus have no power? He is the One who can take away life if He only makes up His mind; on the night Jesus was being arrested, when Peter drew his sword and struck the man who was arresting Jesus so that his ear was cut off, Jesus put the severed ear back, and it stuck right on. What surgeon in this world can put back a severed ear so that it sticks? Because He is the Creator, when He put it back, it stuck.

The Lord, for me and for you, in order to save us from sin and to undergo in our place the judgment we were to undergo, underwent in this way the judgment and shame that we were to undergo at that time. Because He says that He did it for us, that it was His will, that He did it in order to complete His love, that He did this so that those He loves would never be put to shame, never suffer pain, and never be cursed, we must receive it with

faith, saying, "Thank You." Because He says that He wanted it, we simply receive it—even though it was not what we wanted. Who is there who would do this for us? There is no one but God. Even our parents in the flesh abandon us, but "I will not abandon you" is the heart of God and the will of God. God never abandons us. That is why love is stronger than death, and if I love someone, whatever price I pay for that person, if I truly love him, the more sacrifice I undergo for him and the more I pay, the better it is even for the one who does it. Because he loves him, if by his doing this the other is set free from sin, obtains eternal life, and is not judged, he himself feels it was worthwhile.

So we too receive it and give thanks. When Passion Week comes around, I feel burdened, but because He says that He did it because He loves us, I am thankful. *"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5–6).* That Jesus underwent such humiliation and shame, was nailed to the Cross, shed all the blood in His heart, was stripped of His clothes, was struck on the cheeks, and was spat upon—those scenes of shame, pain, and curse were what He underwent for us. Since He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, it may be a natural consequence that He underwent such shame, but even so, we must not forget that the Lord underwent even humiliation and death for you and me, and we must never forget that this was the love with which the Lord loves us.

I hope you will believe. If you believe, you will never forget it. All we need is to believe in our hearts. We will go on living from now on, but without the love of God we cannot live. Without hope, nothing can come of anything. People are in

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despair now because there is no hope in this world. If there is hope, it is all right. However sick one may be, if only there is the hope that one will get well by taking medicine, one can bear it. But without hope, one dies. I hope you will surely remember that He paid the price of such humiliation and sacrifice in order to save His people from their sins, and that you will believe it in your hearts and give thanks. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

It is finished—
the Lord Jesus Christ,
who became
the One who completed love

< John 19:17-30 >

"And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews," but, "He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'"' Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written.' Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Therefore the soldiers did these things. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His

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mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."

All was fulfilled according to the word of prophecy

Pilate, as we know, handed down the death sentence after much anguish. Once Pilate had delivered Jesus to be crucified, all his part was over. When the soldiers took Jesus, Jesus, bearing the cross, went out to a place called Golgotha, and there they crucified Jesus and also crucified two others on either side. Pilate wrote the charge, "The King of the Jews," and put it up, and the soldiers divided the garments of Jesus among themselves and cast lots to decide who would take the tunic. All of this was the fulfillment of the words of prophecy in the Old Testament. Just as He sent Elijah as He had said He would send Elijah, and just as Jesus had the sin of mankind transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, so it was also according to prophecy that the soldiers divided His garments among themselves when He was dying on the Cross.

After all this had been fulfilled according to the word of prophecy, though there were many people beneath the cross,

there were His mother Mary, His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene, and there was the disciple, the Apostle John. *"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother!' And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:26–30)*. This is the scene of the last moments of Jesus on this earth.

Jesus, who finished everything according to the word

After Jesus had said, "I thirst," and had the sour wine put to His mouth, as He was dying He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and gave up His spirit. It means that the Lord had finished all the work He came to this earth to do. Now He entered the tomb and rose again and is seated at the right hand of God, and as He promised, He will come again to this earth for those who believe in Him, and He will prepare that kingdom and give it to the people of God; and whereas until now only God the Father received praise and glory, now the Father wants His Son to receive all glory and praise from all created beings, especially from people and angels, and only that work remains.

I believe that this word, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* means that He had finished everything just as He had said, and that He

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had finished the work of saving us. Then what did He finish? I think, and I also understand it this way, that He finished the love of God for us, that He finished the whole will of God the Father, that He finished the work of coming to this earth in obedience to the will of the Father, saving mankind, making us the people of God, and transferring us into the kingdom of the Son—that He completed love. It means that He finished love. The reason the Lord came to this earth was to save you and me. He came through the body of a woman, and at the age of thirty He had the sin of mankind transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John. Then for three years He taught the disciples and spoke the word of God. After that, He received the death sentence in the court of Pilate and died hung on the Cross, and the last word He spoke was that it was finished. It means that the work He wanted to do, that is, the work of love in loving us, He came to this earth and finished completely.

One may think that this word is just an ordinary word. But we need to go back and think of it from the standpoint of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to this earth to save His own people, whom He had made, from their sins; He promised it; and He truly accomplished that work. That He truly fulfilled what He had promised, without falsehood, is called the truth. The truth—that is, what is true. It means that He finished the work He came to this earth to do to save us, the work of love. I understand this word to mean that He gave us everything, even the blood in His heart; that since the wages of sin is death, He offered His body before God the Father as the sacrificial offering to save us from sin; and that He fully accomplished the work of saving us by taking upon Himself the humiliation He suffered and all the pain we were to suffer because of sin, and by giving up even His own life.

I do many things, and so do you. To be able to say that

something is all finished, there is no telling how much work one must do and how great a price one must pay. The Lord, in order to save His people from their sins, came to this earth and was born and grew up; He had the sin of the world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John; He taught the disciples; and though He was always persecuted by the Jews, He revealed that He was God, raising the dead, healing the sick, and having the gospel preached to the poor; and then, in the body that had received baptism from John, He bore the sin of the world and died hung on the Cross. That He said, as He died, that it was finished means that He completed His love. That He completed love means that He did all the work He had to do in coming to this earth. He gave up even the blood of His own heart entirely for us.

He who offered His soul as a trespass offering

Let us look at the word of Isaiah. *"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand" (Isaiah 53:10)*. That God the Father was pleased to bruise Him and put Him to grief means that He made His Son receive the curse that we were to receive. A trespass offering refers to offering a sacrifice before God with a fifth part added, when, for example, one has stolen another's goods. It means that Jesus Christ, who is the LORD of hosts and our Savior, gave up His own life for the life of each one of us, for you and for me, for His created beings. Of course, it was the life of the flesh that He gave up, and God lives forever, but He gave up everything He had. His being persecuted, His being struck on the cheeks, His

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being stripped of His clothes and put to shame, His being struck with the scourge, His suffering of being rejected on this earth, His whole life of thirty-three years—all of it was given up for you and me, for mankind, in order to save His people from their sins, for those who receive the word of truth.

That is why it is finished. It means that He gave up everything He had, in order to save us abundantly, and that by paying the price of our sins sufficiently and abundantly, He finished it. What He is saying is, in effect: I have finished giving My love to you; because I love you, I have paid the price abundantly so that you may be saved completely. That is how He saved us. It goes on to say, *"He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:11–12).* It means that by doing this, Jesus Christ lets us receive a portion. Those who have received the remission of sins before God come to possess heaven and also come to receive glory together with Jesus Christ. As for His dividing the spoil with the strong, it means that when we come over to the side of the victor, He lets us receive the blessing of enjoying together the blessings that the victor enjoys.

When Jesus Christ said that it was finished, people just suppose that He must have finished it, but what it means is that He finished loving us. It means that He gave up everything, paid the price of sacrifice, and saved us. We must not take lightly the sacrifice Jesus Christ made in dying on the Cross. To say that since I have believed and been saved, my life is now my own, and to live only for oneself, and to oppose in one's heart the work

of God and the work of spreading the gospel, or to refuse to accept Jesus Christ and oppose Him—that is the devil. God did not make the devil. God made the angels, human beings, all spiritual beings, and all the things of nature, and all the things of nature comply with God and obey Him, yet a few among the angels, and a great many among human beings, oppose Him. What is an adversary? That is the devil. An adversary becomes a devil. It means that He finished loving us, that He sacrificed everything and paid the price and finished the work of saving us. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the same one God. They are the LORD of hosts. The Father planned, and the Son agreed to what the Father had planned and came to this earth and saved us. Therefore, we must know and believe that He said He had finished the work of saving us by giving everything He had—that He had finished His love.

The Lord, who Himself underwent what we were to undergo

When I do some work, I find that finishing a task completely is not so easy. Jesus, during His thirty-three years of life on this earth, sacrificed Himself, humbled Himself, suffered, was despised, and was spat upon, and how miserable it was at the end! He received the death sentence in the court of Pilate, and how the Jews hated Him! They shouted all together to crucify Him. The Gospel of John speaks the word on a high level: the One who is the King of kings, the Ruler, the Governor, and the One who rules over all things is Jesus Christ, and the shame He suffered before He died hung on the Cross—being struck on the cheeks and spat upon—is beyond words. How could the Creator be spat upon, struck on the cheeks, stripped of His clothes, and

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put to shame by the created beings He Himself had made? It is utterly miserable. But that was for you and me. He Himself underwent the suffering and shame that you and I were to receive, not for a while but forever, as the price of sin. We must know it that way and believe it that way. He paid the price of His love. Because He loves us, so that those He loves would not perish, He underwent all the judgment, humiliation, shame, curse, sickness, pain, and hurt that we were to undergo. And so He saved us.

There is no telling how hard it is to accomplish even one thing. Accomplishing even one thing is no small matter, so how much more—could it have been easy for Jesus Christ to come to this earth and save us by paying the price with everything He had, in order to deliver you and me from sin, from the curse, from shame, from pain, and from destruction? Now He had completed it all. The sour grape vinegar was something that could not be drunk, so it had been set aside, but when He said, *"I thirst!" (John 19:28)* they put it to His mouth. Because He had poured out all the blood in His heart, all the fluid was gone and He was thirsty. People held up to His mouth something like vinegar that they themselves would not drink, and though He put it to His lips, because it was vinegar He could not really drink it, and Jesus said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. Before He died, since His mother in the flesh, Mary, had come to the foot of the cross and was weeping, He said to the Apostle John, *"Behold your mother!" (John 19:27)* telling him to serve her. But that does not mean that Mary has any relationship with God the Father. If one forces it together in fleshly terms and calls Mary the Queen of Heaven, that amounts to saying that besides God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, there is a woman God. Today a certain sect goes around preaching, saying that there is God the Mother, but that is a tremendous blasphemy

and an act of opposing God. It is a fearful thing even among the forms of idolatry. Because He had promised to come in the form of a human being, He came through the body of a woman. Mary herself knew it that way. If Mary really were the Queen of Heaven, if she were God, would she have stayed still while her son was dying?

Jesus, who paid the price of love in full

Jesus paid the price of love in full. If you want to buy something, you save up money and then buy it. For us to finish something completely, we must keep paying the price, and when all that we have paid for is completed, we say it is finished and hold a completion ceremony. In the same way, Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved mankind, and He finished it in order to save completely not only you and me today, but also those who have not yet come in, and even the many people who are still opposing Jesus. He is giving us a word of blessing: I have paid the whole price, so do not be afraid any longer; if only you believe, it is eternal life; if only you believe, you are My people; if only you believe, you can become My workers; if only you believe, you can share what the strong have taken as spoil and enjoy riches and glory. We have been clothed in such glory. He suffered like this, paying the price, in order to save us.

It is not that there is no suffering in our serving the Lord. To oppose the Church of God and to refuse to accept the gospel—that is opposing Him. Not being united is also opposing Him, and it is the evidence that one is now becoming a slave of the devil. One must turn back. One must turn back from what is wrong. Only then can one receive by faith all that God gives, the love of which He said it was finished. He completed His love

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toward us with His own sacrifice. That is why we have been saved. Do you think salvation came about simply? He lived a life of thirty-three years on this earth. Jesus Christ knows all our weaknesses too. Because He, like us human beings, has sympathized with our weaknesses, when we pray, He receives it all. He says, in effect, "So you are having a hard time because of this; you have this pain; you have this sorrow." So our Lord, at the right hand of the throne of God, has become the Mediator before His Father, and He vouches for us, saying that these people who believe in Him now are His people and the children of the Father. He gathers our prayers and brings them up to God the Father, and Jesus Christ Himself also hears and sees those prayers and answers them.

When Passion Week, in which the Lord suffered, came around, I used to feel burdened, but is one saved by believing only in the blood of the Cross? In fact, believing only in the blood of the Cross is not enough. One believes in Jesus, yes, but one must believe the fact that Jesus is the God of hosts and the LORD God, the Creator, the Governor, and the Commander of all things, and that He is everything to us. And only when one believes that He came to this earth and, because He loves us, paid everything—that He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, suffered humiliation, underwent even death, and rose again, and so paid the whole price, and that thereby He saved us—only then is that faith complete and that salvation complete. If instead one says that one believes just because, having heard it, it makes sense, and then after being saved says, "Now I will live my own life; I will live for myself; my life is my own," and opposes, sneers at, and mocks the serving of the gospel, then one becomes exactly the same kind of adversary as the Jews who opposed Jesus here. One becomes just like the fallen angel, the adversary.

Such a person goes to hell. If one does not know this, that is one thing, but once one knows it, one must believe. If one does not know, there is still hope, but if one knows and still does not believe, that person will go to hell before long. We must not become like that.

Do not oppose the love of the Lord, who finished everything

Your parents also worked hard to raise you. When we grow older and have children and raise them, we come to know that our parents, too, when we would not eat, struggled to feed us, coaxed and soothed us, saying they would give us candy, worried more when we were sick than if they themselves were sick, changed our diapers and made us clean and dry—and raised us like that. Just as we come to know the heart of our parents when we grow up, so if we are to be saved we must believe in God. In the Old Testament He is called the LORD God, and in the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, the God who exists by Himself promised that He would send the Savior and save us, and in the New Testament, Jesus Christ, the King of kings, came to us as the High Priest and as the Prophet and offered His body, offered the price of love, and saved us. This is what we must believe. And those who truly believe obey. They do not oppose Him. Once in a while there are times when we oppose Him. There are times when the flesh twists and says, "How tiresome—every time we gather, how much they go on about the gospel of the water and the Spirit," but inside, the Holy Spirit rebukes us. When He says, "Is that right of you? Are you not wrong?" then even though our outer man was getting irritated, when the Lord speaks within us, we say, "That is right."

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It means that we do not oppose Him. The evidence that we have been saved, the evidence that we believe He has finished His love, is that we do not oppose the work of God, the people of God, the will of God, and the spreading of the gospel. That is the evidence of having been saved. But if there is still an opposing heart, it is the evidence that one has not yet been saved.

How can we oppose Him? How can we not serve the gospel? How can we, after being saved, live enjoying ourselves only for our own sake? It makes no sense. Jesus Christ paid the price for all mankind. He is saying, in effect: I have paid the price of love in full; because I love you, I have given even My life and suffered even humiliation and disgrace; what more do you need? If you need more, I will give it. In His sight, it is so perfect. It means that He accomplished so perfectly the love with which He loved us. We must not oppose Him. Believing the gospel one way, being saved another, living another, and having a purpose yet another—how can one's purpose be something separate? *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. Therefore, working for the spreading of the gospel is being united with God and repaying the love of God. We may not be able to repay it all, but at least we do not oppose Him. When we get worn out and weary from working, we say, if we keep on like this we will fall sick, so let us rest a little and then go on; if we keep on like this we will freeze to death, so let us turn on the heating and go on; since we are human, let us make a room where we can rest—and in that way we keep on. In the end, we are trying to live for the gospel and for the glory of God. God has finished the work of removing all the sin of all mankind; He has said, "I have finished the work of loving you; I have completed love"—so how could we oppose Him?

But there are many people in this world who oppose Him.

On the Internet they deny the divinity of Jesus, and in some books they treat Jesus far too lightly, and people accept such things. Do they not know that they are being spiritually defrauded? There are many kinds of fraud. There is fraud of the flesh, there is fraud in love, and there is fraud of the soul. If one is spiritually defrauded, it is a disaster. One must guard one's own soul and one's own heart oneself. Sometimes Satan the devil incites us with an opposing heart. At such times we must say, *"Away with you, Satan!"* If one opposes the Lord, it is a curse. If we are lacking, if things are not going well, if it seems we cannot keep up, then even if we slow down a little, we must not oppose and not refuse, but adjust ourselves well, be united, and follow along. We cannot go alone. We go together with the church. So we must be saved, and after being saved, we must live for the glory of God and then go when God tells us to come.

The world changes fast. We do not know what this world will be like ten years from now. Are ten years far off? They come quickly. Ten years from now, the seawater may rise up onto the land. Right now the ice of the Antarctic and the Arctic is melting so fast that the ground where the ice used to be is being exposed, and when all that water goes into the sea, the salinity decreases and the fish die, and when the weight of the seawater suddenly increases, earthquakes occur where the terrain is weak, the ground splits, and lava gushes up. Here it surges up and there it sinks in, and such things happen all over this earth. But that does not mean it is the end. Why are such difficult things going to happen on the earth from now on? He is saying: It is finished; I love you, and I have finished My love; because I love you, I have paid the whole price; only believe; only do not oppose Me; then heaven is yours. The world is changing so much, and He is telling us to accept such changes quickly and not oppose Him.

Jesus Christ is the LORD of hosts. In the Old Testament, it

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is not only God the Father who is the LORD. The word Jehovah is the word Yahweh, and it means the One who exists by Himself. When Moses said to God, "If I go to the children of Israel and tell them that God has sent me, they will ask me what the name of God is, so what shall I answer?" He said, *"I AM WHO I AM" (Exodus 3:14)*. It means that He is not a God made by anyone. In the early days in our country, when it was translated as Yahweh, people who believed in other religions could not pronounce it well and mocked and persecuted the believers, and so, deciding that the name of God must not be mocked every day, they rendered it Jehovah. We read it as Jehovah, but the original name of God is Yahweh, meaning the One who exists by Himself. That so many difficult things are happening is His telling us to stop opposing Him and accept Him quickly. *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17)*. That is telling us to turn back. We must know that the reason this world is in difficulty now is that God is telling us to turn back, not that He intends to wipe us out and destroy us.

It is finished; He has paid the whole price abundantly. Because He paid the price abundantly, it says, *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13)*. Since He has delivered us from the power of darkness, from the power of the adversary, there is only one thing we must not do. We only have to not oppose Him. If we have no faith, we only have to be united, with even faith as small as a mustard seed. If we oppose Him, we are ruined. We are ruined suddenly one day. The nearer the end comes, the more we must keep alert and not become adversaries. There is nothing special about our receiving blessings from God. If we do not become adversaries, but believe and follow and are united with one another, God gives us blessings and provides for us in due season.

Have you not seen with your own eyes the end of those who opposed Him? It is the end. We did not really know, but God knew. He said, in effect, "It cannot go on with you any longer," and God cut them off. I never told anyone to leave. I only said, do not do that, do not oppose Him, or a disaster will follow. Those who left go around saying that when I go to a meeting I demand that this and that be prepared, but I am not a person who goes somewhere and says, bring out this, bring out that. When I go, I eat whatever I am given, and I watch carefully to see whether there is any hardship and whether there is anything we can help with. Some people describe me as a really fearsome person, but I am really soft toward the weak. Toward adversaries I am strong, but toward the weak who serve the Lord, I even bring my level down to theirs. I talk with them, saying, "So that is why it was like that; I am the same. But this matter is like this." As long as one is not an adversary, one's future is guaranteed, and the days ahead are guaranteed.

It is finished; God has completed His love. To put it once more, it means that He completed His love with which He loved me, He completed the love of God toward you, and He completed the love with which He loved all mankind. That completion came at the price of sacrifice. Let us not forget it; when things are hard as we live our lives, let us think of the sacrifice of the love of the Lord, and above all, let us be united and live well by faith. And I hope that you will enjoy the blessings the Lord gives and then meet the Lord. I give thanks to the Lord, who completed love. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus, who carried out what He promised

< John 19:28-37 >

"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.' And again another Scripture says, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced.'"

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He who fulfills His promises according to the word of the Scriptures

The death of Jesus Christ is not like the death of an ordinary person. It means that His death, His receiving baptism, and His birth on this earth were all promised beforehand. Jesus was nailed to the Cross and was dying in the middle, with robbers on either side, and Pilate wrote on the cross, in three languages—Greek, Latin, and Hebrew—that He was the King of the Jews. It meant that He was the true King of the Jews. In the eyes of Pilate, Jesus was the true King of the Jews, truly qualified to be king, and however much he searched for fault, He was One without blemish, spot, or stain, who had never committed a sin in this world. Nevertheless, because the religious Jews wanted it, he handed down the death sentence.

Jesus, hung on the Cross, had poured out all His blood, and He sensed that the time had now come for everything to be fulfilled. It means that the time had come to put the final word on it. So, that the Scripture might be fulfilled—what God had promised through the prophets thousands of years before is called prophecy because it was promised beforehand—in order to fulfill what had been prophesied, in the midst of imminent death, He said, *"I thirst!" (John 19:28)*. This is extremely hard to understand. Not only those who have not been born again but even those who have been born again find it hard to understand. The Old Testament is the old promise, and the New Testament is the fulfillment of that old promise—they are paired up in this way—and what had been promised thousands of years before was fulfilled in the New Testament age. It means that Jesus, as He was dying on the Cross, said, "I thirst," in order to fulfill the word that had been promised long ago. How deep the connection is! Speaking of today, it is more than four thousand years, and

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even from the time of Jesus, it is more than a thousand years. More than a thousand years before, in Exodus, in the Psalms, in the Old Testament Scriptures, He had promised how He would be crucified and die.

This is just like what He said in Genesis: *"He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15)*. This is a prophecy and a promise. Ordinary people do not know what this word means even when they see it. The Seed of the woman means the promise that God the Son would one day put on human flesh and come to this earth through the body of a woman as the Seed of the woman, just like a man, and that He would have all the sins of this world transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John and die on the Cross, and so remove all those sins. It was the promise that He would remove cleanly, white as snow, the sin that the devil had instilled in man, and make us the children of God—that He would come as the Savior and complete this work. That is what He was doing here at this very moment.

Jesus, who sought to fulfill the prophecy

The heart beats hard, pumping blood out to the whole body, and the blood that has gone around the whole body comes back to the heart and is sent out again. The heart is a pump that circulates the blood, but with nails driven through His hands and feet, the hoses had been cut. All the blood was leaking out. The human body is made up mostly of fluid, and it cannot hold out if it goes without fluid for even a little while. Because He had shed all His blood on the Cross, before He died He said, "I thirst," and people dipped a sponge in a vessel full of sour wine and put it to His mouth. Sour wine is vinegar. And not just ordinary

vinegar, but extremely strong vinegar, so that when it touches the tongue it causes pain, and they say that when a greater pain comes, one forgets the pain one had before. That is why they applied it to His lips, and this too was a prophecy.

Let us look at the word of the Psalms. "*You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; My adversaries are all before You. Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; And for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Psalm 69:19–21)*. This is a psalm of David. When David was going through great hardship, the Holy Spirit prophesied this through the heart of David. God works through people. Even now God is speaking to all of us, to the church, and directing us in what to do, through those who have gone ahead of you. This prayer came out while David was praying at a time of great hardship. David is speaking about himself, but as we see it, David was not in a situation to pray a prayer of this degree. He had subordinates, and he was still king. Yet when he prayed, he prayed exactly like this. Just as God had the prophet Samuel and the prophet Isaiah speak on His behalf the words He would say to the people of Israel, so now He is speaking through David.

It means that when the Lord was hung on the Cross, He really wanted to be comforted and consoled, but there was no one to comfort Him. People mocked Him as they passed by. They mocked Him, saying that He had always said He was the Son of God, so if He was the Son of God, let Him come down by Himself. There was no one to take pity on Him. At that time the disciples of Jesus and His mother in the flesh could not go near, and were beating their breasts and weeping in sorrow from far off, and a great many of the people beat their breasts and wailed. But because the Roman soldiers were near, they could not go

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near, and when such terrible pain was being inflicted, people mocked Him. It means that the heart of the Lord at that time was like this. Moreover, it says that they gave Him gall for food and made Him drink vinegar when He was thirsty. The word cho used here in our language means vinegar. Gall is so bitter that if it is accidentally burst when an animal is slaughtered, the whole meat becomes so bitter it is hard to eat. Vinegar, as you have tasted, is very sharp. They dipped a sponge in old vinegar, tied it to hyssop, and put it to the mouth of Jesus—how painful it must have been! David prophesied this long before the Lord came. The Holy Spirit prophesied beforehand through David that Jesus Christ would come to this earth and undergo such suffering.

Because Jesus knew the Scriptures well, He said, "I thirst," in order to fulfill this. He could simply have died—of course, He must have wanted to drink water too—but He sought to fulfill the Scripture. It means that everything—Jesus Christ coming to this earth and being born, His receiving baptism from John, His bearing the sin of the world, His being nailed to the Cross, His death, His resurrection, and His coming again—was all prophesied beforehand. Even that you and I will be raptured and taken up, God let us know beforehand by taking the prophet Elijah alive in a chariot of fire. He prophesied that when the Lord comes, just as a magnet pulls up iron filings, He will pull up into the air the people of God, those who have the Spirit, those who have been sealed by God—believers as well.

The Lord, who rose again as He promised

After the Lord had received the sour wine, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and died. The Lord had promised that

He would live again, that He would rise again on the third day. He really did rise again on the third day. At that time the Roman army was the best army in the world. The nation of Rome had almost never lost a war with any nation. The Roman army surrounded the tomb one, two, three deep, but on the third day, when He had said He would rise again, the Roman army vanished without a single man left. When an angel came down from heaven, rolled away the stone, and stood there, no human being could endure it. No human being could endure it, army or not. It is because the Lord is God the Son. I understand that He let Himself suffer in that way only because He was the One who had come to this earth in order to save human beings from sin, in order to carry out that work.

It goes on to say, *"Let their table become a snare before them, And their well-being a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see; And make their loins shake continually. Pour out Your indignation upon them, And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their dwelling place be desolate; Let no one live in their tents" (Psalm 69:22–25)*. That is why the nation of Rome fell. That nation of Rome, which had crucified Jesus Christ and was riding high on victory, collapsed. Other peoples invaded and swept it all away, and Rome disappeared from this earth. Because that nation had nailed Jesus Christ to the Cross and killed Him, its dwelling place became desolate and no one lived in its tents. David prayed that prayer, but it was a prophecy by the Holy Spirit. No person who opposed God and no nation that opposed God has remained on this earth. Long ago, the Egypt of Pharaoh opposed Him for a while and then disappeared. God swept them all into the Red Sea. Rome opposed Him and then disappeared. On the other hand, God causes nations that believe in Him to prosper. The history of the world can be seen from many points of view, but from the point of view of

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Christianity, the place where the work of the gospel takes place, whether a false gospel or the true gospel—the nation in which those who receive and believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God increase in number—prospers. That is not something I insist on; when we actually trace through history, it is all like that. The nations that once swept the world were nations that had printed the Bible and sought to serve the gospel for the world, and our country, too, which received that gospel, achieved a prosperity unprecedented in world history not long after it had been devastated by war. It is because, though it is not the true gospel of the water and the Spirit, they are nations that nonetheless believe in God and pray to God. Now, in the midst of that, we are preaching this true gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This prayer, asking Him to let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see and to pour out His indignation, is actually fulfilled. Pilate, the Roman governor who ruled the nation of Israel, is said to have died miserably in his last years. The nation of Rome fell, and the nation of Israel also fell. After they had crucified Jesus, Israel was completely reduced to beggars for a thousand years. "Let their table become a snare before them"—it became a situation in which they had to risk their lives to make a living. Because of the persecution of Rome, they scattered and lived all over the world, and though they worked hard and lived well, they also suffered a great massacre. The word of the Scriptures, even a word given long ago, does not change. There has never been a time when it was not fulfilled. Where did He promise to send those who oppose Him and those who do not believe? He will send them to hell; He will put them into the unquenchable fire—this is the promise. The Bible speaks of death as sleeping, which means that being sent to hell has not yet been carried out. But in the end He carries it out according to the word. He will send us to heaven; He will send us to the

Millennial Kingdom; there is a garden that bears fruit in all four seasons, rivers flow, there are houses built of twelve kinds of precious stones, there is always light and no darkness, there are no evil people and no unclean people, and it is a place where true kings go in and out—and we say that we are those kings. That promise, too, the promise of the Book of Revelation, is actually fulfilled for you and me.

So the word is telling us that God is the One who promises and fulfills. He is different from us created beings. Even now, God the Son is within us by the Holy Spirit and speaks to us, and when we fall into the thoughts of the flesh, He makes promises. He is saying this word: "I will give you this. So endure well and hold out in your present circumstances, love the Lord most, and follow the will of the Lord, and I will reward you like this. But if you live only to eat well and live well for yourself and oppose Me, I will cancel it. I do not take pleasure in having saved you. I will deal with you according to the law by which the one who received one talent is put into the unquenchable fire and dealt with by the law for the hypocrites." This is not my story, and it is not my feeling. That is why I, too, cannot do as I please after meeting the Lord. What good is it if I eat well and live well on this earth? I will be gone before long, so what good is it to receive glory from people? Blustering at people is what people do because they have no power; a person who knows the word of God, has the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and has the Holy Spirit in his heart does not do that. When you encounter the world of pastors, there is a difference as great as between heaven and earth between a born-again pastor and a person who is not born again. Even if billions of people came at him, they could not overcome one born-again person. There is no comparison.

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"Take your sandals off your feet"

Once I sat together at a gathering of several leading pastors from various denominations. They said there was no telling how hard translating the Bible was. When I asked why it was so hard, they said it was extremely hard because translation is not something one can do just by knowing the letters, but one must also know the culture of that country well. When I asked them to give me an example, they said that when Moses met the Lord on Mount Horeb, the Lord said, *"Take your sandals off your feet" (Exodus 3:5),* and that this must not be translated literally as it is. As for why He told him to take off his sandals, they said that the Middle East is all sandy desert and people usually go about in sandals, so there is a lot of dirt between the toes, and that is why He told him to take off his shoes; and they said that one must know such things and translate freely to suit the language of that country. That is distorting the word. So I got angry and spoke. I said, do you think the Lord told him to take his sandals off his feet because there was a lot of dirt between his toes? How do you know what this word is saying? What He was saying was this: take off everything Moses had experienced until then; take off all your experience and all that you know; now that you have met Me, receive purely what I say to you, receive it as a command, obey it, and carry it out—and for that, take your sandals off your feet. From now on it is something new. *"Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17)*. That is how it is with those who have met God. They must throw away everything they have experienced until then. And from then on, they must receive what the Lord has said, obey His command, and follow by faith. Only then can they follow the guidance of the Lord.

His bones not broken, and pierced with a spear

Jesus, hung on the Cross, said, *"It is finished!"* and died. It means that God the Son, having put on human flesh and come to this earth, had finished the work of saving us, the work of receiving the judgment that removes all our sins. Now all that remained was for Him to rise again and to carry out, as He had promised, the promise that whoever believes in Him would obtain eternal life, for those who believe in Him. He said it was finished and died, and then, it says, they did not break His bones. At that time the Sabbath lasted from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday, and He was arrested and died on Friday. He died at about two or three in the afternoon, and by the time the sun set it would be the Sabbath, and since the Sabbath is a very holy day, on which such things must not be done and dead bodies must not be left out, they asked the Roman governor for the bodies. So he said he would make sure they were dead and then hand them over. The Roman soldiers broke the legs of the two men who still had life in them, but when they came to Jesus, He was already dead. Since breaking the legs was not easy, they made sure of His death in the easiest way, by thrusting a spear into His side. In case He was not yet dead, they just pierced Him. When the spear was pulled out, two things, blood and water, came out separately. That means that He was already dead. If a person has not died, blood and water are mixed together—when blood flows, the water is in the blood; water does not come out separately and blood separately. But when a wound is made in a dead body, the blood comes out as blood and the water as water, separately. So blood and water came out, and the one who saw it said it was true. He testifies that what this One said while hung here, and what He had said before, was all true; that this is truly the Son of God and God the Son; that He is the Creator and the

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Savior, and that though He had no sin, He was hung in this way.

How did the Lord save you and me? He put on human flesh, came to this earth, and saved us with the water and the blood. Not only did He have our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, but He was also hung on the Cross and received the judgment for our sins and shed His blood, and by paying the price with His own life He saved us and rose again. This too He did in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Let us look at the word of Exodus. *"In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones" (Exodus 12:46)*. This may seem to be a plain record of the situation at that time, but everything about the lamb is about Jesus Christ. It is what God commanded the people of Israel through Moses at the time of the Passover, but who is this lamb? It speaks of Jesus Christ. It was the promise that Jesus Christ would one day have the sin of mankind transferred to Him and be sacrificed and die in this way, and so save mankind from sin, and it actually came to pass.

Verse 37 said that another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced," and this word is the word of Zechariah. *"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn" (Zechariah 12:10)*. Actually, countless people among the people of Israel mourned. When He was arrested, received the death sentence, and went up the hill of Golgotha, a great many people of Israel wept. The Roman soldiers and the religious leaders, of course, did not. Even in this age, those who believe the word purely, like us, are fond of us, but those who cover up the word and believe only what the pastor of their own church and their denomination say rather

persecute those who believe in the truth. At that time, too, those who believed purely wept and wailed when Jesus was arrested and went up to Golgotha carrying the cross. Jesus said, *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28)*. He was telling them to believe. If they believe, it is all right, but if they do not believe, they will really suffer pain more severe than His and go even to hell.

And the Lord really rose again. The Lord appeared as many as eleven times over some forty days. He kept appearing as many as eleven times, so it cannot be a lie. One cannot do that before the eyes of so many people; and He had the marks of the nails in His hands and the mark of the spear in His side, and He had them put their hands there. He rose again in this very form. Though we do not know how the Lord will be dressed when He comes to this earth, He will come to us in this very form. His essential form is not the form of this flesh. You and I, too, are in this form now, but once we are caught up to the Lord, we are no longer such weak beings. We will be changed from a body that decays and falls sick into a spiritual body, a body that does not fall sick, a body that lives forever, a body that does not die.

Be bold by believing in God the Son

What is certain is that all the things God the Son did in coming to this earth to save us, even His being hung on the Cross, and there drinking the sour wine, His legs not being broken, and His being pierced with a spear, and so on—all these things were fulfilled as prophesied in the Old Testament. And because everything had come to pass as prophesied, Jesus said it was finished and died, and three days after His death He rose again

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and appeared to the disciples as many as eleven times over some forty days, testifying to them, and He went up as they watched. He is telling us that the things God the Son did in making the universe and coming to this earth and saving us were facts.

He is God the Son. He is the Creator. He is not a human being like us, not a created being, not someone who was made. Therefore, because the work in which He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for sin for us was so great in its price and in its labor, those who believe in Him abundantly obtain eternal life, abundantly obtain the remission of sins, abundantly become the children of God, and abundantly go to heaven and can live with God forever. It is because He is so great, because He is God the Son, and because it is different from the labor of us human beings.

I hope that you will know and believe that God the Son, whom we believe in, being such a One, labored for us, and that you will have boldness in your hearts. Do not fall down because of weakness. You are weak, but the Lord actually has power, and He did great labor and paid a great price. If even a person's laboring and paying a price for another person has effect, then since God the Son labored like that and paid such a price for you and me, how great must that price be? I hope that you will know that fact and believe it in your hearts, always look to the Lord and press forward by faith, and run on without sinking into despondency and without drawing back.

Why am I telling you this? It is because you and I are weak and lacking in the flesh, and so we can keep sinking into despondency and collapsing. One may blame oneself, saying that a person like me just cannot live a life of faith well. But we are weak, yet the One who saved us is great, because He is God the Son; His labor is a tremendously great labor, and the price

He paid for us is so great; and so, whether we are lacking or not, if only we believe in Him and follow Him, I believe that He can make us into those who are well able to follow God, into the workers of God, into the people of God, into glorious beings. Do you believe it too? I hope you will live with that faith. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

We are those who believe in Jesus Christ, the One who has great power

< John 19:31-36 >

"Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'Not one of His bones shall be broken.'"

The blood and water that came out on the Cross

Earlier we looked at the word that the Lord came to this earth and finished the love with which He loves us. Because He did everything we needed and completed it all, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and died. That day was the Preparation Day. The day Jesus died on the Cross was the day of preparation

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for the Passover, the greatest feast of the nation of Israel, and the Sabbath overlapped with it. According to their formalities, dead bodies must not be left as they were either on the Sabbath or at the Passover, so they petitioned the governor Pilate to have the bodies taken away. Pilate had the soldiers make sure of death, in case any were not yet dead, and had the bodies taken down from the crosses. The soldiers went to the first man and broke his legs mercilessly to make sure of his death, went to the second man also and broke his legs, and when they went to Jesus to break His legs, they saw that He had already said it was finished and that His breathing had completely stopped. The two robbers were still alive, but the breathing of Jesus had stopped. So they did not break His legs, but thrust a spear into His side to make sure of His death. When they jabbed the sharp spear in and pulled it right out, blood and water came out separately from inside.

It says that he who has seen has testified, but who saw this? When Jesus died hung on the Cross, many women saw it too, but among the men it was the Apostle John who saw it. The Apostle John was at the foot of the cross, and Jesus said, *"Behold your mother!" (John 19:27)*. Jesus, having had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, and knowing that all things were now finished as He died hung on the Cross, entrusted to His disciple, as the last thing He had to settle on this earth, the matter of who would support His mother in the flesh, Mary. He was saying, in effect, "When I go up, you support and help My mother in the flesh." So from that day the Apostle John took Mary to his own home and supported her. I will share the word on the basis of this word. *"But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe" (John 19:34–35)*.

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The evidence that He removed our sins: the water and the blood

The soldier went up and broke the legs of the two men, but when he went to Jesus, He was already dead. Still, just to be sure, he thrust a spear into His side and pulled it right out, and water and blood came out. Here, *"he who has seen"* is neither the first person nor the second person but the third person; it is the Apostle John, who recorded the Gospel of John from the standpoint of an objective observer, speaking of himself. The Apostle John knew and believed in Jesus, and he knew everything that Jesus had told the disciples about His dying hung on the Cross. And when he saw that everything actually came to pass just as Jesus had said, and that water and blood came out, he recorded it: "He who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; what I say is true, so that you may believe." He testified of what he had seen—but what did he testify of? It means that he testified that water and blood came out.

The Apostle John knew all about the work in which Jesus came to this earth and, because He loves us, removes our sins—that is, His having sin transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, His dying hung on the Cross, and His rising again from the dead. He came to this earth and finished the love with which He loves us, but what is the result of that finished love? Because He loves us, He did this for us and did that for us and did everything for us, but when one does some work, a result remains, does it not? What is that which remained? About that which remained, the Bible speaks in this way, and the Apostle John testifies in this way. It is the blood and the water. The Apostle John testifies that the blood means that He gave us life, and that the water means that He had our sins transferred to Him, received the judgment for sin on the Cross, and gave us true life.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit means that the result of the work that Jesus Christ came to this earth and finally finished is the blood and water of the Cross. That was poured out from His side. It tells us that God so loved the world that Jesus Christ came to this earth, and that the result of all that love with which He loved us was the blood and the water.

The Apostle John is a man of God. He is a disciple of Jesus Christ, and he heard and believed all the facts that Jesus Christ came to this earth and finished. The Apostle John also wrote the First Epistle of John, and there too he testifies of this. So we, too, when we believe in Jesus, must know it this way and believe it this way. *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God: and whosoever loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for the witness of God is this, that he hath borne witness concerning his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he hath not believed in the witness that God hath borne concerning his Son –ASV" (1 John 5:1–10).*

That the Apostle John said, *"He who has seen has testified,*

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and his testimony is true" (John 19:35) means that he testifies because he saw and heard it all. The Apostle John testifies that when Jesus died hung on the Cross and they thrust a spear into His side, clots of blood and water poured out from there. We speak of standing as a witness, and of presenting evidence. He presents the evidence that the Lord saved us, the evidence that He loved us, the evidence that He gave us new life, the evidence that He removed our sins, the evidence that He made us the people of God, the evidence that He made us the people who will go and live in heaven. That is the very blood and water. What poured out from His side was blood and water, and in Genesis, God made Adam, and then took one rib from the side of Adam and made a woman. Adam said of Eve, *"This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23)*. Jesus Christ calls us His bride. It means that we came out of His side. Because the Lord loves us, He came to this earth through the body of Mary, putting on human flesh, and finished loving us and completed it, and the evidence of that is the blood and the water. That is why the Apostle John said, *"Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1)*, and, *"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world" (1 John 5:4)*. This the Apostle John testifies to all mankind. It means that the fact that blood and water came out of the side of Jesus is the evidence that God loved us.

How deeply grieved and how sorrowful the Apostle John must have been as he saw, from the foot of the cross, the One who was his teacher and his Lord dying! But the Apostle John was different. The words and actions of Jesus Christ, and when He was pierced with the spear and clots of blood and water poured out from His side—the Apostle John testified of it. He has recorded it in the Bible and is testifying of it to us now. He was not steeped in sorrow; he was full of joy. He recorded it,

overflowing with delight, saying that the Lord really loved us and really saved us with the water and the blood, that this is the evidence, the evidence that He gave us new life. We have fleshly feelings, but feelings are nothing. *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. What is the truth? It is Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the King of kings, the Creator, God, the Sovereign, the Commander, the Ruler, and our Savior. How did He come to this earth and save us? He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, and so He saved us. It means that this is the truth. It is not a lie but the very truth. Many people fail to be saved because they do not know who Jesus Christ is and what work He did for us.

God the Father truly loved us, mankind—that is, you and me—through His Son. Because He loved us, Jesus came to us; He was born as a human being; because He loved us, He had sin transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John; because He loved us, He underwent all the punishment and shame for that sin. And He gave even His life to us, and because He loved us, He rose again. Of course, it is because He is God. And the evidence of that salvation with which He saved us is that the water, the blood, and the Spirit—these three—agree as one. This becomes the evidence. The Holy Spirit becomes our evidence, so that the Holy Spirit is in the hearts of us who believe, and we can know that our salvation was accomplished with the water and the blood and that we have obtained new life. The Apostle John, as Jesus died hung on the Cross, is testifying, saying, "This One has really saved us. He has saved us with the water and the blood. He has given us new life and washed our sins clean. Having had sin transferred to Him, He underwent this humiliation, and through this death, through this resurrection, He has really saved us." The Apostle John knew Jesus Christ

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exactly. The other disciples also recorded such things, but no one knew and recorded the divinity of Jesus as much as the Apostle John. That is why the Gospel of John is called the "Gospel of the Eagle." It means that it is the Gospel that looks down very exactly from the highest place.

Christ, who is the Creator, the Savior, and the Prophet

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. *"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven'" (Matthew 16:15–17)*. People guessed and said about Jesus that He was one of the prophets, that He was John the Baptist, that He was this one or that one, but when Jesus asked the twelve disciples who they said He was, Peter boldly stepped forward and said, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. To say that the Lord is the Christ is to say that He is the King, and that He is the Creator and the almighty God. It means that He is the Christ, the Creator, our Savior, the Prophet who preaches the truth to us, and the true truth. Peter confessed his faith that He is the true Creator of the universe, the Savior who came to save us, and the true Prophet who testifies of this salvation to us.

The words that follow are also extremely important. While being the Son of the living God the Father, He is the Christ. The Christ is the Creator, the King of kings, the High Priest, and the Prophet. That He is the King of kings means that He is the Creator who created the universe and all things, my Creator; that

He is my Savior, the High Priest, means that He is the High Priest who washes away sin so that we can enter the kingdom of heaven; and that He is the Prophet means that He is the One who testifies of the true truth. That the Son of the living God is the Christ means that He is the King of kings and the Creator, that He is our Savior, and that He is the Prophet who testifies of the true truth. This confession of Peter is a tremendous confession. The confession of the Apostle John is that He saved us with the water, the blood, and the Spirit. The disciples of Jesus have such very clear confessions of faith and testimonies of salvation. Jesus is the Son of the living God the Father, and that Son created the universe and all things, saved us, mankind, with the water and the blood, and testified of it.

After Jesus had said on the Cross that it was finished and had died, the Jews said that since the next day was the Passover and the Sabbath, they could not keep the feast with dead bodies left in the middle, and they asked that the bodies be taken away. The governor Pilate had the soldiers make sure of death and had the bodies taken down quickly. They broke the legs of both of the two men, but since Jesus was already dead, to make sure, they thrust a spear hard into His side. If one thrusts a spear into the side of a living person, clots of blood and water do not pour out separately. Only blood flows, and what is inside flows out. But in a person who has already died, the blood and water are all separated and congeal separately. Some people even say that Jesus did not die on the Cross but fainted and came to life again on the third day, but try hanging there yourself. When a long spear whose blade alone is more than ten centimeters is thrust in hard, it goes in twenty or thirty centimeters. From there, clots of blood and water gushed out. The Apostle John is testifying of it. It means that He really came to this earth as a human being and had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received

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from John, and that He died on the Cross and, by His death, by His shedding of blood, gave us new life. It means that our sins He washed away by having them transferred to Him with the baptism He received and by receiving the judgment for sin, but new life He gave us with His blood, with His life. He is telling us that because He really loved us, He gave us new life.

Do you believe in our God? Do you believe in God, who created the universe? We knew, without even thinking about it, that God the Father created that universe. But in fact He made it together with His Son. And through His Son He saved us, mankind, from sin. With what did He save us? He saved us with the water and the blood. Let us look at the word of the First Epistle of Peter. *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*. What effect does the water have on us, once Jesus died hung on the Cross and rose again? It is the sign that saved us and washed away our sins. It means that what cleansed this conscience of ours, which becomes defiled when we think of sin, what cleansed our hearts and souls—not washing away the filth of the flesh—was the baptism that Jesus received from John.

Our believing in Jesus is believing that God became a human being, received baptism from John, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again, and so saved us. It means that all of this was the work of God and the plan of God. God loved us and determined to save us in this way, finished it in this way, saved us in this way with the water and the blood, and gave us new life—so how can we not believe this? How can we not testify of it? That is why the Apostle John testifies. He confessed, saying: the Lord is the Christ; You are the Creator; You are our Savior; You are the true truth; You are the One who testifies. Though

He is the Son of God, as the Creator, the Sovereign, the Ruler, the Commander, the Savior, and the High Priest, He saved us completely and invited us into His kingdom. When we believe in Jesus, who is the Christ, we can enter the kingdom of God, and our sins disappear. He did not merely say so with words; He actually did the work of saving us. The Apostle John said that he testifies so that we may believe. He presents the water and the blood as evidence.

In our language there are two words for God. People in general say Haneunim, a general word meaning "the God of heaven"; we say Hananim, meaning "the One God." People in general call upon Haneunim universally because human beings were originally created by God. But when we call upon Hananim, our God, we are speaking of the fact that He saved us in this way. There is the one and only God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and when we believe in Jesus, who is the Christ, who created the universe, saved us, and testifies of this with the water and the blood, we obtain salvation. When we believe the testimony of the Apostle John we obtain salvation, and when we believe the testimony of Peter we obtain salvation. Do you believe that the Apostle John and Peter were saved as disciples of Jesus? Then if we, too, receive their testimony in the word just as it is, we obtain salvation.

The faith that believes in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God

The Lord is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The core of distinguishing whether a faith is true faith or not is whether or not one believes that Jesus is the Christ. The core is whether one knows and believes the fact that Jesus is the Christ. Yet there are

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very many people who say they believe in Jesus without even knowing the meaning of the name of Jesus, and there are a great many people who, even when the meaning of the word Christ is explained to them, do not know what it means. Christ means King, High Priest, and Prophet. King means the King of kings, the Creator, the Ruler, and the Commander; High Priest means the Savior, that is, the One who will save mankind from sin. Who is the One who will save mankind from sin? It is Jesus. It means that among men under heaven, no other name by which we can obtain salvation has been given, and there is no one but Jesus. That is why He came bearing the name Jesus. *"For He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. He is Jesus because He is the One who came to save us. And the Christ attached after Jesus speaks of His title and His nature. It means that the One who has such offices and powers—King, High Priest, and Prophet—came as our Savior and saved you and saved me.

All we have to do is believe. We have nothing good of our own to put forward, and there is just one thing we must do. It is to acknowledge that we are worthless beings who, without Him, would go to hell. Yet He came as the Savior and saved me in this way. As the Christ—the King of kings, the Ruler, the Commander, the Sovereign, the Judge—He came to this earth, became my Savior, and saved me. And He testified of it to me. It means that He gave us the Bible, sent us His Holy Spirit, and sent His disciples to us, making them the messengers who convey His salvation of love, and so He saved me and saved you. Do you believe it? It is a tremendous thing. If one hears this and still does not believe, one must go to hell. There is no need even to go to church, nor any need to devote oneself to the Lord.

He testifies, presenting the water and the blood as evidence, presenting the fact that He is the Christ as evidence, and presenting the fact that He is the Creator as evidence. In the

beginning God created the heavens and the earth; when He said, "Let there be light," there was light; He said, "Let there be a firmament," and, "Let the earth bring forth herbs yielding seed and fruit"—who was the One who spoke these words? It was Christ Jesus, who came to save me and you. God the Father was with Him and the Holy Spirit was with Him too, but the One who spoke was Jesus Christ. *"The world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:10–12)*. It says that He came to His own. Is it not the land He Himself had made? Who made this earth? Christ Jesus, who became our Savior, made it. He Himself came to the land He Himself had made in order to save us, but a great many people did not accept Him and rejected Him. Yet there were also those who received Him. To those who received Him, those who received Jesus as the Christ, those who say, "You are truly God, the Creator, the Commander, the Sovereign, and the Judge. I accept that You saved me, and I also accept that You judge me," He gave the right to become children of God. It means that He says, "You are My people." Because He has the right to bless, He gave blessings to us, to you. Yet there are many people who are unsure about it and go on every day like this, wondering whether to believe or not. Even those who preach this open the word and do not know what it means.

Yet it is not that everything is settled just because the meaning is explained in every detail. It is because even those who oppose God, once they know it, will say they believe. Knowledge is always only knowledge. More important than knowing is that I believe what I know. The Lord looks at whether one believes or does not believe. When He asked, *"But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15)*, Peter said, *"You are the*

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Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16), and Jesus said, *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17)*. He went on to say, *"On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:18–19)*. So it is with Peter, so with the Apostle John, and so with Paul, who wrote the Scriptures. Who is Jesus? He is the Christ. What meaning is there in the Christ? There is the meaning of the Creator, the Ruler, the Commander, and the Savior, and there is the meaning of the Judge. It means that He saved us. He who is the Creator, the Sovereign, the Ruler, the Commander, and the Judge came to this earth through the body of Mary, putting on human flesh, and having promised and then fulfilled it as He had promised, He Himself saved you and me. In what state were we when we were saved? When we were slaves to the devil, the Lord came to us and saved us. We were fundamentally opposing God, but so as not to send us to hell, He came to us and saved us. And just as He asked, "Who do you say that I am?" He is now saying to us, "Do you believe in Me? Do you believe that I am the Christ?" Do you believe? We believe in such a One. We do not believe in the names of the founders of religions who practiced asceticism, fell into self-pity, agonized, and died; we believe in the Christ. We believe in that Absolute One who is the Creator, the Almighty, the Savior, the Ruler, the Sovereign, and the Judge, and we believe that He has saved us. Such a person goes to heaven. Even if he is lacking, he goes because he believes in his heart. If one does not believe with the heart, it is nothing. If one does not even believe, how could one go to heaven? To believe in Jesus is to believe in the Christ. Just saying "I believe in Jesus" is not believing; it is just attending.

True Christians who believe with the heart

So there are two kinds of Christians on this earth: visible Christians and invisible Christians. It seems that countless people in this world believe in Jesus. There are many visible ones. Those who say they believe in Jesus number more than a billion. God is not looking for visible Christians, but for Christians who believe in the Christ with their hearts. To which do you belong? Are you invisible Christians, or visible Christians? You are invisible Christians. We are tremendous. When people of the world put on airs because they have a lot of money and despise others, I say in my heart to such a person, "Say your building has a hundred floors, and say you have however much money—I am far richer than you. I do not live with money piled up, but whenever I need it and ask for it, God gives it all. Is a person without money not a human being?" We are those who believe in the Christ.

When Christianity came into our country, it was a time when Confucianism and Buddhism were teeming everywhere. So the gospel did not spread. When people read the Bible once, since there were words like *"Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matthew 5:3)*, they took it that those who advocated non-possession were Christians. In fact, that is not what it means. It means that those who are poor in heart—who know that they are nothing and are bound for hell, and who receive into their hearts Jesus, who is the Christ, His power and authority, and the great God—are blessed. But when Christianity came in, because they could not preach the gospel if those who believed in Jesus came on strong, the early missionaries preached that since there is a word of the Bible that says if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also, those who believe in Jesus must live good lives like this. So people saw only that those who believe in Jesus

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unconditionally and meekly say yes, yes. That is wrong. When we, believing in the Christ, are unreasonably persecuted, it tells us to endure when we must endure; it does not tell us to live helplessly. There are many people who persecute us unreasonably and demand, "Since you are one of those Jesus people, you should be humble like this." Not everyone who believes in Jesus is like that. You should know the fact that among those who believe in Jesus there are also many who set things right when the other party does not act rightly. I, too, when people are rude, put up with most things and endure because of Jesus, but if they say something that makes no sense, I set it right. The only person who says such things in a sermon is someone like me. I am a person who believes in the Christ with my heart.

Because we believe in the Christ, because we believe that the Christ came to this earth as the Savior and did the work of the Savior in order to save us from sin, from judgment, and from destruction, we receive salvation. Salvation comes upon us, we become the children of God, we become workers, we go to heaven, and we also reign. The Bible says that those who believe reign. In fact, spiritually speaking, are we not kings? When we look at literary men, scientists, and the rich of the world, we cannot say it openly, but we look down on them from above. If someone comes in a fine car and shows off, we say in our hearts, "Do you think we will bow down? What does your coming in that car have to do with you? Is your character as fine as that car? Have you no sin? With sin as you are, only the outside is splendid. Go and receive the remission of sins. I am a person who believes in the Christ. If you do not want to go to hell, do not act cocky; you will be judged." This is not bravado. It means that there is such self-respect in our hearts, and that there is faith. So every work we do, every service we do, is for others. Is there

anyone among you who lives only for himself? Being in the church, we all labor for others, for those who will be saved. If we were only trying to feed ourselves, would there be any reason to serve the gospel so diligently?

The Passover Lamb whose bones were not broken

The Lord entered the tomb with His bones unbroken, rose again, and went up. He has the mark of the spear, and the marks of the nails in His hands. The reason the Lord died first, so that they could not break His bones, is the word of the Old Testament that when the Passover lamb was slaughtered, its blood put on the doorposts, and its flesh eaten with bitter herbs, the bones of that sacrificial offering were not to be broken. *"In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones" (Exodus 12:46)*. Who is that lamb of sacrifice at the time of the Exodus? It speaks of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ of the New Testament had our sins transferred to Him in that way with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood, rose again from the dead, and saved us. That is why, in order to fulfill the word, His bones were not broken.

So you and I must surely know that we are those who believe in the Christ. To say that we are those who believe in Jesus is far too weak. Everyone believes in Him, and even swindlers boast loudly that they believe in Jesus. We are those who believe in the Christ. That Christ is Jesus, and the word Jesus means the Savior who came to save us, and we believe that the Christ has saved us. Just as when we call a person's name we do not describe all that person's abilities but only call the name, so we believe by calling the name Jesus, and we believe in the Christ.

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When we call that name, we believe in His power together with it; we do not believe in the name alone. I hope you will accept and believe in His power as well. I hope you will also believe that He saved us by His power. We praise the Lord, who saved us in this way. We give thanks. ✉

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CHAPTER

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John Chapter 20 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

John 20:1–10—what does the empty tomb of Jesus testify of within the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

John 20:1–10 shows that Jesus overcame the power of death and actually rose again. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place. And by rising again from the dead, He became the Savior who gives the remission of sins and eternal new life to those who believe.

1. The morning of the resurrection began on the first day of the week

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark. Because she loved Jesus, she went to the tomb grieving over His death. But up to this time, Mary did not know the fact that Jesus had risen again.

Before the eyes of Mary, only death and the tomb could be seen. But on that very dark dawn, God brought the age of death to an end and opened the new morning of the resurrection. Because Jesus rose again, the way of eternal life was opened to

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those who had been shut up in sin and death.

2. The stone that had been taken away was the first evidence announcing the event of the resurrection

When Mary arrived at the tomb, the stone that had been blocking the tomb had already been taken away. Matthew chapter 28 records that an angel of the Lord came down and rolled back the stone, and Mark chapter 16 records that the stone was very large.

The stone was not taken away in order to open the way so that Jesus could come out. Jesus, the Lord of life, is not One who could be shut up by the power of death and the tomb. God opened the tomb so that people could see the empty tomb and confirm the fact that Jesus had risen.

Jesus had already said, *"I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18)*. His resurrection was not an event that happened by chance, but the work of salvation that Jesus had spoken of beforehand and accomplished according to the will of God.

3. Mary did not yet realize the resurrection

Even when Mary saw the empty tomb, she did not think that Jesus had risen again. Rather, thinking that someone had moved the body of Jesus to another place, she ran to Peter and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved.

This shows the fact that with human thoughts alone, one cannot fully realize the work of salvation of God. Even with the empty tomb before one's eyes, if one does not know the word of

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God, one interprets the event by one's own experience and judgment. The resurrection of Jesus, too, must be received not as a doctrine made up by human thoughts, but as the event of salvation that God spoke of and actually accomplished.

4. Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb

When Peter and the other disciple heard the words of Mary, they immediately ran toward the tomb. The other disciple arrived first, stooped down, and looked into the tomb, and Peter, who came after him, went straight into the tomb.

The two disciples confirmed in detail not only the fact that the body of Jesus was not there, but also the linen cloths and the handkerchief that had been around His head, which remained in that place. Their actions show that faith in the resurrection did not come from groundless imagination or emotion. The disciples went directly into the tomb where Jesus had been buried and confirmed the scene.

5. The linen cloths and the folded handkerchief testified of the resurrection of Jesus

Inside the tomb, the linen cloths that had wrapped the body of Jesus were lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head was not lying with the linen cloths, but was folded together in another place. If someone had hurriedly stolen the body of Jesus, there would have been no reason to tidy up the cloths that had wrapped the body and leave them behind.

Jesus overcame death and rose again in a perfect resurrection body. The linen cloths and the handkerchief could no longer hold

the body of Jesus. The traces of death remained inside the tomb, but Jesus, the Lord of life, was not there. The empty tomb and the linen cloths that were left behind became the evidence showing that the very same Jesus who had died on the Cross had risen again.

6. *"Went in also; and he saw and believed"*

Then the other disciple, who had arrived at the tomb first, also went into the tomb, saw the scene, and believed. He began to accept the fact that the body of Jesus had not simply been moved, but that the Lord had risen again.

However, verse 9 records that the disciples did not yet know the Scripture that Jesus *"must rise again from the dead."* The disciples began to believe the fact of the resurrection when they saw the empty tomb, but they did not yet fully realize the fact that this resurrection was the event of salvation that fulfilled the promise of the Scriptures.

Afterward, the disciples met the risen Jesus, remembered the words that Jesus had said before, and came to believe the Scripture and the word of Jesus (John 2:22). True faith in the resurrection does not remain only in the experience of what was seen with the eyes, but is established by the faith that realizes the word of God and believes it in the heart.

7. The resurrection of Jesus is the event that completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The resurrection of Jesus is not an event separated from His baptism and the Cross. The work of salvation of Jesus was

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accomplished as one complete flow.

Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. By bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received in our place the judgment of sin that mankind had to receive. By being buried and rising again on the third day, He overcame the power of sin and death, and He revealed that He is the Son of God and the Savior of life.

Paul, too, testified that Jesus *"was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25)*. Therefore the resurrection testifies that the death of Jesus on the Cross was not a defeat, but the victory of salvation, in which He paid the price of sin completely.

8. Those who believe in the risen Jesus obtain new life

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not end with acknowledging only the baptism of Jesus and the Cross. It is to believe in one's heart even the fact that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind, received the judgment of that sin, and rose again from the dead.

Those who believe in this gospel have all the sins of their hearts washed away and become righteous, and they receive the Holy Spirit as a gift and live with new life. Also, even if the body dies, they believe that the Lord will raise them again on the last day. The resurrection of Jesus is not the resurrection of Him alone, but the promise of resurrection that He gives to those who are united with Him by faith.

Romans 6:4 says that just as Christ was raised from the dead, we too have come to *"walk in newness of life."* To those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, both the new

spiritual life of the present and the resurrection of the body to be enjoyed in the future are promised together.

9. We must go forward from the empty tomb to the faith that believes the word

After the two disciples confirmed the empty tomb, they went away again to their own homes. But the work of the resurrection of Jesus did not end there. The risen Lord appeared to the disciples Himself, confirmed His resurrection to them, and established them as witnesses of the gospel.

Today we cannot go into that tomb ourselves, but we receive the evidence of the resurrection through the word recorded in the Bible. When we believe the word that God caused to be written, we come to realize the fact that the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection were the very work of salvation for me. By that faith we can escape from sin, condemnation, and the fear of death, and live in the hope of the resurrection.

Conclusion

The empty tomb of John 20:1–10 is not a mysterious place from which the body of Jesus disappeared, but the place that testifies that Jesus overcame the power of death and rose again. The disciple who saw the linen cloths and the folded handkerchief began to believe that Jesus had risen, and afterward he came to realize the Scriptures and the word of Jesus and to have complete faith in the resurrection.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the

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Cross in our place, and completed salvation by rising again from death. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts have all their sins washed away and obtain new life, and they come to have the hope of rising again with a glorious body on the last day. The resurrection of Jesus is the salvation of God that confirms to those who believe that sin and death are not the end, but that eternal life awaits them.

John 20:11–18—what does it show that the risen Jesus established Mary Magdalene as a witness of the resurrection?

John 20:11–18 is the word in which the risen Jesus Himself meets Mary Magdalene, who was sunk in sorrow, calls her by name, and establishes her as a witness who delivers the news of the resurrection. This event shows the fact that Jesus completed salvation with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, and that He establishes those who believe in this gospel as the children of God and as witnesses of the gospel.

1. Mary remained outside the tomb, weeping

Peter and the other disciple went away to their own homes after confirming the empty tomb, but Mary remained outside the tomb, weeping. To Mary, Jesus was the most precious One, who had delivered her from her suffering and given her a new life. Therefore the sorrow of Mary, who thought that even the body of Jesus had disappeared, was all the greater.

Mary loved Jesus, but she did not yet fully realize the word of the resurrection. Jesus had already said several times that after

He was killed He would rise again, but Mary thought only of the tomb and the death that were before her eyes. Even though the risen Lord was near, the heart of Mary was still seeking the dead Jesus.

2. The sorrow of Mary was turned into joy when she met the risen Lord

When Mary stooped down and looked into the tomb, two angels in white were sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. The angels asked Mary, *"Woman, why are you weeping?"*

Mary answered, *"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."* Mary did not think of the resurrection of Jesus, and thought only that someone had moved His body. But Jesus was not One who was among the dead, but the Lord of life, who had overcome death and risen again.

Before He was crucified, Jesus had said to His disciples, *"You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy" (John 16:20)*. Just as that promise said, the tears of Mary were turned into the joy of meeting the risen Jesus.

3. Jesus was beside her, but Mary did not recognize Him

Mary turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that He was Jesus. Even when Jesus asked, *"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"* Mary thought that He was the gardener.

Because Mary was looking for the body of the dead Jesus,

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she did not immediately recognize the living Jesus. Her sorrow and her own thoughts kept her from recognizing the risen Lord who was before her eyes.

Even today, people cannot fully know Jesus with only their own thoughts and religious knowledge. If one knows Jesus only as a great teacher or as a righteous man who was martyred, one does not yet fully know the Savior who rose again from death. When we believe the word of the gospel that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and then rose again from death, we come to know that He is the living Savior.

4. Hearing the call *"Mary!"* she recognized Jesus

When Jesus called her by name, *"Mary!"* Mary at last recognized Him and answered, *"Rabboni!"* This means Teacher. Mary could not recognize Jesus only by seeing His appearance, but she recognized Him when she heard the voice of the Lord calling her.

Jesus had earlier said concerning the good shepherd, *"He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out" (John 10:3)*. He also said, *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27)*. The scene in which Jesus called, *"Mary!"* shows exactly how the good shepherd knows His own sheep and calls them by name.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also hear the voice of Jesus calling them through the word of the gospel. They come to believe in their hearts that Jesus bore not only the sin of other people but all my sins with the baptism He received from John, that He was judged in my place on the Cross, and that He rose again from death and became my Savior.

5. The resurrection of Jesus shows that the work of salvation was completed

The One who appeared before Mary was the very same Jesus who had been crucified. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place. And on the third day He rose again from the dead.

Therefore the resurrection of Jesus testifies of the fact that death could not hold Him, and of the fact that the work of saving sinners was accomplished completely. If Jesus had not risen again, the death on the Cross would have remained only a sorrowful death. But because Jesus rose again, it was confirmed that His baptism and the Cross were the work of salvation that settled all the sin and judgment of mankind.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel of believing in all three—the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Peter testified, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism… through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*. Because Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of that sin on the Cross, and by rising again from death, He gave the remission of sins and new life to those who believe.

6. He said, *"My Father and your Father"*

Jesus referred to the disciples as *"My brethren"* when speaking to Mary, and told her to tell them, *"I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."*

This word shows that through the work of salvation of Jesus,

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the way for sinners to become the children of God was opened. Jesus is originally the only begotten Son of God, and those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit become the children of God by grace through the salvation He accomplished. Because Jesus removed all the sin of mankind, those who believe are no longer sinners to be judged before God, but children who call God Father.

The Holy Spirit, too, comes upon the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and testifies that they are the children of God. Therefore those who are saved do not treat God only as a fearful Judge, but can call Him *"Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15–16)* and draw near to Him by faith.

7. The word *"Do not cling to Me"* and the mission entrusted to Mary

When Mary recognized Jesus and rejoiced, Jesus said, *"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father."* Then He commanded Mary to go to the disciples and deliver the news of the resurrection and the ascension.

The Lord did not let Mary remain only in the relationship from before the resurrection, but had her deliver to the other disciples the salvation that the risen Jesus had accomplished. The grace and joy that Mary received were not something to keep to herself, but the news of life that had to be delivered to others.

The same mission is given to those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who are saved by believing in the Lord must not remain only rejoicing in their own salvation, but must preach to

other souls the gospel that Jesus removed all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

8. Mary testified that *"she had seen the Lord"*

Mary obeyed the word of Jesus, went to the disciples, and testified that *"she had seen the Lord."* Mary, who had been weeping before the tomb, was established as the first witness who preached the risen Jesus.

Mary did not deliver a story that she had imagined. She testified of the living Lord, who had called her by name and spoken to her. Mark 16:9 also records that the risen Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had earlier cast seven demons.

The testimony of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same as this. It is to tell, on the basis of the word, what Jesus accomplished for me. It is to testify that Jesus bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John, that He was judged in my place on the Cross, and that He rose again from death and became the living Savior.

Conclusion

John 20:11–18 shows the process in which Mary Magdalene, who had been shedding tears, met the risen Jesus and obtained joy, and became a witness who preached that resurrection. Mary at first looked for the dead Jesus, but when Jesus called her by name, *"Mary!"* she recognized the living Lord.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He

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received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross in our place, and completed salvation by rising again from death. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts have all their sins washed away, receive the Holy Spirit, and become the children of God. Also, just as Mary testified that "*she had seen the Lord,*" they come to live as witnesses who preach to other souls Jesus Christ, who saved them, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished.

John 20:19–23—what does it mean that the risen Jesus said to His disciples, "*Peace be with you*"?

John 20:19–23 is the word in which the risen Jesus appears to the disciples, who were shut up in fear, gives them peace, and entrusts them with the mission of preaching, together with the Holy Spirit, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The disciples now had to live not as people in hiding, but as witnesses who preach to the whole world the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus completed.

1. The disciples were afraid and had shut the doors

On the evening of the first day of the week, the disciples were gathered together with the doors shut, for fear that the Jews would seize and kill them too. They had heard from Mary Magdalene the news that Jesus had risen again, but they had not yet completely escaped from fear.

The disciples, who had seen Jesus die hung on the Cross,

could not know what would become of them from then on. In their hearts were fear and doubt, sorrow and guilt, all together. Shutting the doors was an act to avoid the Jews, but that appearance shows that the hearts of the disciples, too, were shut up in fear.

2. The risen Jesus came into the midst of the disciples

Even though the doors were shut, Jesus came to the place where the disciples were gathered and stood in their midst. This shows that Jesus overcame death and rose again, and that He had put on the glorious body of the resurrection, which is no longer bound by death or by material restrictions.

In Luke chapter 24, too, when the disciples thought that Jesus was a spirit, the Lord showed them His hands and His feet and told them to handle Him. The risen Jesus is not One who existed only in a vision or in the memory of the disciples, but the One who died on the Cross and rose again bodily.

The shut doors could not stop the risen Jesus from coming to the disciples. In the same way, to those who are shut up in sin and fear, Jesus comes with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and gives salvation and peace.

3. *"Peace be with you"*

The first word that Jesus spoke to the disciples was not a rebuke, but the word, *"Peace be with you."* The disciples who had abandoned Jesus and fled, and Peter, who had denied the Lord three times, were also in that place. But Jesus came into their midst and proclaimed peace.

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This peace is not merely a comfort that calms the heart. It is the peace of salvation that Jesus could give because He had completely settled the problem of sin. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place. And by rising again from the dead, He overcame sin and death.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit enjoy peace with God, because they know that Jesus has already borne all the sin of mankind and been judged. Romans 5:1 also says that those who have been justified by faith have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

4. His hands and His side testified that salvation had been completed

Jesus showed the disciples His hands and His side. In His hands were the marks of the nails of the Cross, and in His side was the trace of having been pierced by the spear of a soldier. These wounds testified of the fact that the One who was before the disciples was the very same Jesus who had been crucified.

The wounds of Jesus are not the traces of defeat, but the evidence that He completed salvation. Jesus, who bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross because of that sin, and now He had risen again from death and stood before the disciples.

When the disciples saw the hands and the side of Jesus, they knew that He was the Lord and were glad. The resurrection of Jesus showed the fact that His death was not the end, and that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross

is complete. Jesus, who is alive while bearing the wounds of the Cross, is the Savior who guarantees the remission of sins and eternal life to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

5. Why Jesus spoke of peace again

After showing His hands and His side, Jesus said again, *"Peace to you!"* The first peace is the word that reassured the fearful disciples, and the second peace is the word He gave before sending them into the world.

The mission of preaching the gospel cannot be carried out by one's own ability or boldness alone. One must first obtain peace in one's heart by believing the fact that Jesus removed all sins. One who has not escaped from the fear of one's own sins and judgment cannot preach the gospel of the remission of sins to others with confidence.

Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have been reconciled with God, and because the Holy Spirit is in their hearts, they can preach the gospel in the peace that the Lord has given.

6. *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you"*

God the Father sent Jesus into this world in order to save sinners. Jesus came in the flesh, bore all the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John, and completed salvation with His death on the Cross and His resurrection.

Now the risen Jesus sent the disciples into the world. He sent them not so that the disciples would accomplish the work of

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salvation of Jesus over again, but so that they would testify of the work that Jesus had already completed. They had to preach to all nations the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection.

This mission also appears in Matthew 28:18–20 and Luke 24:46–48. Christ suffered and rose again from the dead, and the word by which people receive the remission of sins in His name must be preached to all nations. The disciples of Jesus were established as witnesses of all these things.

7. *"Receive the Holy Spirit"*

Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit."* The risen Jesus is the One who gives the Holy Spirit to those who believe. This word shows that the disciples were given the mission of preaching the gospel together with the Holy Spirit, and it leads on to the full work of the Holy Spirit that appeared afterward at Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit is not One who is received through human emotional excitement or a special experience. God gives Him as a gift to those who have heard the gospel of salvation that Jesus accomplished, believed it in their hearts, and received the remission of sins. Ephesians 1:13 says that those who heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and believed were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, that He received the judgment of that sin on the Cross in our place, and that He rose again from death and became the Savior. The Holy Spirit comes upon the hearts of those who have had all their sins washed away by this faith.

8. The remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are given together

In Acts 2:38, Peter preached that when people receive the remission of sins, they receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Also, in Acts chapter 10, Cornelius and his family received the Holy Spirit when they heard and believed the gospel of the remission of sins that Peter preached.

Therefore, to think that one has received the Holy Spirit while sin still remains in one's heart does not agree with the order of salvation that the Bible speaks of. The Holy Spirit, who is holy, dwells in the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel that Jesus washed away all sins.

The Holy Spirit makes those who are saved believe that the word of God is the truth, makes them sure of the salvation the Lord accomplished, and leads them to preach the gospel. He also changes the disciples, who had been shut up in fear, into bold witnesses of the gospel.

9. *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them"*

The word that Jesus gave the disciples the authority to remit sins does not mean that the disciples could remit or condemn the sin of people by their own judgment. Only God can actually remove sins, and Jesus completed that work with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The authority given to the disciples is the authority to preach accurately the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus completed. When the disciples preach the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit and a sinner believes that word in his heart, he receives the salvation from the sins that Jesus has already removed.

Acts 10:43 also testifies that those who believe in Jesus receive the remission of sins through His name. The power to remit sins does not lie with the evangelist as an individual, but with the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he preaches. The one who preaches the gospel does not complete the remission of sins, but proclaims the salvation that Jesus has already completed.

10. *"If you retain the sins of any, they are retained"*

Even when the gospel has been preached, if a person holds on to his own thoughts and his own righteousness and does not accept that word, the sins of his heart remain as they are. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind and was judged, but those who do not believe that word of salvation cannot accept the remission of sins that has been accomplished for them.

Also, if those who are saved do not preach the gospel, the people of the world cannot hear how Jesus removed their sins. Therefore this word also contains the responsibility of the disciples, who have been entrusted with the gospel of the remission of sins.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not people who decide by their own feelings whether another person is saved or not. They make clear what sin is according to the word of God, and preach how Jesus bore and removed all that sin. If the hearer believes this gospel in his heart, he receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and if he rejects it, he remains in sin as he is.

Conclusion

John 20:19–23 is the word in which the risen Jesus came to the fearful disciples, gave them peace, and confirmed the completion of salvation by showing them His hands and His side. And He gave the disciples the Holy Spirit and sent them to preach the gospel of the remission of sins to the whole world.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross in our place, and completed salvation by rising again from death. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts have all their sins washed away, enjoy peace with God, and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The authority of the remission of sins given to those who are saved is not the authority to remit or condemn the sin of people at will, but the authority to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed. Therefore those who have obtained the peace the Lord has given must preach the gospel of the remission of sins, led by the Holy Spirit, and live a life of serving so that other souls, too, may believe this word and be saved.

John 20:24–31—what did Jesus say to Thomas, who doubted?

John 20:24–31 records the event in which Thomas confessed, *"My Lord and my God!"* after he had confirmed the risen Jesus for himself. But the center of this word does not lie only in the fact that Thomas saw Jesus. It lies in the fact that, because the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished has been recorded in the Bible, we must now believe that word and obtain the remission of sins and eternal life.

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1. Thomas could not believe the testimony of the other disciples

When Jesus appeared to the disciples on the day He rose again, Thomas was not in that place. The other disciples testified, *"We have seen the Lord,"* but Thomas said that he would not believe unless he confirmed for himself the print of the nails in the hands of Jesus and the wound in His side.

The problem of Thomas lay in his saying that he would believe only if he confirmed the resurrection of Jesus with his own eyes and hands. He put his own senses and judgment ahead of the testimony of the resurrection that the other disciples had given him. But the faith of salvation does not begin from what one has seen and experienced for oneself, but from hearing and believing the word that God has had recorded in the Bible. This is also the reason it is said, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).*

2. Jesus did not abandon Thomas, but made him a believer

After eight days, Jesus appeared again to the disciples, with Thomas among them. The doors were shut, but Jesus stood in their midst and said, *"Peace to you!"*

Jesus knew all the words that Thomas had spoken before. The Lord told Thomas to confirm His hands and His side, and said as follows.

"Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20:27).

The purpose for which Jesus appeared to Thomas did not lie in rebuking him and driving him away. It was to lead Thomas to escape from doubt, believe in the risen Jesus, and make a true

confession of faith. Jesus is the One who comes to those whose faith is weak, awakens them with His word, and makes them believers.

3. The wounds of Jesus show that the work of salvation was actually accomplished

In the hands of the risen Jesus were the marks of having been nailed to the Cross, and in His side was the mark of having been pierced by the spear. These wounds show that Jesus, who died hung on the Cross, and Jesus, who rose again and appeared to the disciples, are one and the same.

The death of Jesus on the Cross was not a defeat that happened unexpectedly. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place. And by rising again from death, He revealed that He is the Son of God and the Savior who overcame the power of sin and death.

Just as the word says that Jesus *"was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25),* the resurrection of Jesus confirms the fact that the remission of sins and the salvation He accomplished are complete.

4. *"My Lord and my God!"*

Thomas, who met the risen Jesus, confessed as follows.

"My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28).

This was not merely a word acknowledging that Jesus had

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risen again. Thomas confessed that Jesus was his Master and his God. Jesus is not merely a great man who overcame death, but God, who came to this earth in the body of a man.

Also, Thomas did not speak of Jesus in general terms as *"Lord"* and *"God,"* but confessed Him as *"My Lord"* and *"my God."* True faith does not remain in acknowledging as knowledge that Jesus is the Savior of mankind. It is to believe in one's heart that Jesus removed all my sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, and to receive Him as my Lord and my God.

5. Those who believe by the word without seeing are blessed

Jesus said to Thomas:

"Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

The people after the ascension of Jesus cannot confirm the hands and the side of Jesus with the eyes of the flesh as Thomas did. Instead, God had the apostles record in the Bible the words and the works of Jesus that they saw and heard for themselves. Therefore, to believe in Jesus today is not to try to see His form in a dream or a vision, but to believe in one's heart in Jesus, to whom the Bible testifies.

The faith that believes without seeing is not a blind faith that believes without any grounds. The testimony of the apostles, who witnessed the incarnation of Jesus, the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection, is recorded in the Bible. Through that written word of God, we meet Jesus and believe in the salvation He accomplished. Peter, too, testified that the end of the faith that rejoices, *"Whom*

having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing" (1 Peter 1:8–9), is the salvation of souls.

6. To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to accept the whole work of salvation

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to accept the whole work of salvation of Jesus just as the word says.

— Jesus is the Son of God, and God, who came to this earth in the flesh.

— By receiving baptism from John, Jesus fulfilled *"all righteousness"* and bore all the sin of mankind once and for all.

— As the Lamb of God who bore the sin of the world, Jesus died on the Cross, shedding His blood, and received the judgment of sin in our place.

— By rising again from the dead, Jesus overcame the power of sin and death.

— Those who believe this word of salvation in their hearts receive the remission of all their sins, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and become the children of God.

The First Epistle of John testifies that Jesus Christ is *"he that came by water and blood –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8)*, and says that the Spirit, the water, and the blood testify together to the salvation of Jesus. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not separate the baptism of Jesus and the Cross from each other. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins with the blood of the Cross, and gave new life to those who believe by rising again from death.

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7. The purpose for which the signs were recorded is that we may believe and have life

John says that Jesus did many other signs that are not recorded in this book. Then he clearly states the purpose for which the Gospel of John was written.

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

The signs of the Gospel of John were not recorded to astonish people. All the events—turning water into wine, healing the sick, raising the dead Lazarus, and He Himself rising again from death—testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

To have life in the name of Jesus is not limited to calling His name with the lips. It is to know by the word who Jesus is and what salvation He accomplished, and to believe it in one's heart. He who has the Son of God has life, and he who does not have the Son of God does not have life (1 John 5:11–12).

8. Faith is to keep on abiding in the word

Thomas believed after he saw the risen Jesus for himself, but today we believe in the salvation of Jesus through the written word. Therefore we must not doubt our salvation every time our feelings or our circumstances change. The assurance of salvation must be placed not on feelings that change, but on the word of God, which does not change.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must hold on to the following word.

— Jesus bore all my sins with the baptism He received from John.

— Jesus received the judgment for my sins on the Cross in my place.

— Jesus rose again from death and became my eternal Savior.

— God has acknowledged me, who believe in this gospel, as a righteous person without sin, and has given me the Holy Spirit.

Those who have this faith can confess together with Thomas, *"My Lord and my God!"* They also preach the word of life that they have received to those who do not yet believe, and so serve so that they, too, may have life in the name of Jesus.

Conclusion

John 20:24–31 is the word in which Thomas, who had doubted, met the risen Jesus and confessed Him as his Lord and his God. At the same time, it teaches us, who cannot see Jesus with the eyes of the flesh, that the written word of the Bible has been given to us, and that those who believe that word are blessed.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross in our place, and then rose again from death. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts receive the remission of sins, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and obtain eternal life. Therefore true faith is not to seek visible experiences, but to accept in one's heart Jesus Christ, to whom the Bible testifies, and the salvation He completed. ✉

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Questions and Answers on John Chapter 20

[Question] 1. What significance does John chapter 20 have concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ and faith?

John chapter 20 is the chapter that testifies of the fact that Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross, overcame death and rose again, and makes clear that this resurrection is the event that gives new life and hope to those who believe. It also shows the risen Jesus giving peace and the Holy Spirit to the disciples and entrusting them with the mission of preaching the gospel, as well as the purpose for which the Gospel of John was written.

First, early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene found that the stone that had blocked the tomb had been taken away. Peter and the other disciple confirmed the linen cloths lying in the tomb and the handkerchief folded separately. Mary wept, thinking that the body of Jesus had disappeared, but when the risen Jesus called her, *"Mary!"* she at last recognized the Lord. The empty tomb was not merely a place from which a body had disappeared, but the evidence showing that Jesus had actually overcome death and risen again.

The resurrection of Jesus is not a strange event that happened to Him alone. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and bearing that sin, He was judged on the Cross and died, and then rose again. With His death on the Cross He paid the price of our sins, and with His resurrection He gave new life to those who believe. Therefore the resurrection

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of Jesus is the sure hope that sin and death have been conquered, and that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will also rise again in the future and enjoy eternal life.

The risen Jesus appeared among the disciples, who had shut the doors for fear of the Jews, and said, *"Peace be with you."* By showing them His hands and His side, He confirmed to them the fact that the very One who had been crucified had risen again. This peace is not a peace that comes because the surroundings have become safe, but the peace that is enjoyed because Jesus completely settled the problem of sin with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection.

Then Jesus said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you,"* and sent the disciples into the world. He also breathed on them and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit,"* and said, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."* This does not mean that the disciples forgive the sins of others by their own ability, but means that they were entrusted with the mission of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, so that those who believe may receive the remission of sins. In this way the resurrection turned the fear of the disciples into peace, and established those who had been hiding as witnesses of the gospel.

The story of Thomas shows with what kind of faith the resurrection must be received. Thomas said that he would not believe unless he saw the print of the nails of Jesus and put his hand into His side. But after he met the risen Jesus, he confessed, *"My Lord and my God!"* Jesus said to him, *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* Today we must believe in Jesus not by a visible form or a special experience, but by knowing and believing through the written word that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and our Savior.

At the end of this chapter, the purpose of the writing of the

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whole Gospel of John is presented: *"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."* The signs and words recorded in the Gospel of John, the Cross, and the resurrection are all so that the reader may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and may have life in His name.

Therefore John chapter 20 does not stop at testifying of the resurrection of Jesus. It shows that Jesus completed salvation with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection, that He gave the remission of sins, peace, the Holy Spirit, and new life to those who believe, and that He sends them to preach that gospel to the world. Those who believe in Jesus, who overcame death, as *"My Lord and my God"* have eternal life and the hope of the resurrection.

[Question] 2. John 20:1—what kind of person was Mary Magdalene, who came to the tomb of Jesus early on the first day of the week?

Before she met Jesus, Mary Magdalene was a woman who had been possessed by seven demons and suffered. Luke 8:2 records her as *"Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons."* Jesus met her, who could not escape from that suffering by her own strength, and set her free from the demons.

After receiving the grace of salvation and healing, Mary Magdalene followed Jesus and served Him. The Bible records that the women who had been healed of their diseases, Mary Magdalene among them, *"provided for Him from their substance."* She was not a person who received help and went back, but a woman who regarded the Lord who had saved her as most precious and served Him with her possessions and her life.

Her love and faith appeared even when Jesus was crucified. Many people were afraid and left, but Mary Magdalene stayed beside the cross. Even after the burial of Jesus was over, she did not forget the Lord, and when the Sabbath had passed, she went to the tomb early in the morning while it was still dark. Neither the large stone, which was hard to move by human strength, nor the fear of the tomb could stop her heart that sought the Lord.

Up to that time, Mary Magdalene did not fully understand the resurrection of Jesus. When she saw that the tomb was empty, she thought that someone had taken away the body of the Lord. Even after Peter and the other disciple confirmed the empty tomb and went back, she did not leave, but stood outside the tomb and wept. To her, Jesus was the most precious One, whom she could not give up and leave even after His death.

Jesus revealed His risen self first to this Mary. At first Mary took Jesus for the gardener, but when Jesus called her name, *"Mary!"* she at once answered, *"Rabboni!"* and recognized the Lord. And receiving the word of Jesus, she went to the disciples and told them that *"she had seen the Lord.* The woman who had been possessed by seven demons was set free by the grace of Jesus and became a person who served the Lord, and at last she became the witness who met the risen Jesus first of all and delivered that news.

Therefore Mary Magdalene was a woman who did not forget the grace of having been saved from great suffering, who regarded Jesus as more precious than anything, and who followed and served Him to the end. Her going to the tomb at early dawn was not out of mere curiosity, but an act that came from deep love and gratitude toward the Lord who had saved her.

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[Question] 3. John 20:6–7—what does the fact that the linen cloths were lying in the tomb and the handkerchief that had been around His head was folded separately show?

When Peter went into the tomb, the body of Jesus was not there, but the linen cloths that had wrapped the body remained in that place. The handkerchief that had been around His head, too, was not mixed together with the linen cloths, but was folded separately in another place. It is said of John, who went into the tomb after him, that he *"saw and believed"* this scene.

This appearance shows that it was not that someone had hurriedly stolen the body of Jesus. If someone had tried to steal the body, it would have been natural to move it while it was still wrapped in the linen cloths, and there would have been no reason to go to the trouble of unwrapping all the cloths that wrapped the body and even folding the handkerchief that had been around His head separately. Moreover, the tomb of Jesus was blocked with a large stone and sealed, and the guards were guarding it firmly. Nevertheless, the body disappeared and only the cloths used for the burial remained in order.

Therefore the state of the linen cloths and the handkerchief is the evidence showing that the body of Jesus was not moved by human hands, but that Jesus actually rose again from death. Jesus died completely on the Cross and, according to the burial custom of the Jews, was wrapped in linen cloths and laid in the tomb, but He was not held by death, and rose again on the third day, just as He had said. The linen cloths left in the tomb tell us the fact that Jesus no longer lies there as a dead man.

This resurrection reveals the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ, the Lord of life. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment

of that sin on the Cross, and then rose again from death. Therefore the linen cloths left in the tomb and the handkerchief folded separately are clear evidence that Jesus overcame sin and death and completed our salvation.

[Question] 4. John 20:16—when the risen Jesus called her name, by what title of respect did Mary address Him?

Mary addressed Jesus in Hebrew as *"Rabboni!" (רַבּוֹנִי)* The Bible makes clear that the meaning of this word is *"Teacher."*

At first Mary did not recognize the risen Jesus and thought that He was the gardener. But when Jesus called her by her own name, *"Mary!"* she recognized that voice and turned to Jesus. And with respect and joy toward the Lord whom she loved and followed, she responded, *"Rabboni!"* that is, *"Teacher."*

Therefore *"Rabboni!"* is the honorific with which Mary, recognizing the risen Jesus, addressed Him respectfully as her Teacher. This scene shows that Mary did not simply guess the resurrection from seeing the empty tomb, but recognized Jesus directly when she heard His voice calling her name.

[Question] 5. John 20:17—what is the meaning of Jesus commanding Mary to deliver the news of His ascension to the disciples?

Jesus said to Mary, who was the first to meet Him after His resurrection, *"Go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"* This was sending Mary as the first witness who

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delivers the news of the resurrection and the ascension. The disciples, who were scattered in fear, had to know the fact that Jesus had actually risen from death and was now ascending to the Father.

There is also an important meaning in Jesus calling the disciples *"My brethren."* Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and then completed salvation by rising again. The disciples who believe in that salvation were no longer people condemned as sinners, but had become the children of God. Therefore Jesus spoke of God as *"My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God,"* and received the disciples as the family of God, united with Him.

The ascension of Jesus did not mean that His relationship with the disciples was ending. Jesus was to return to the Father, and the disciples were to remain on this earth and preach the salvation that Jesus accomplished. So on the evening of the day He rose again, He said to the disciples, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."* Just as God the Father sent Jesus to save sinners, now Jesus sent the disciples into the world to testify of that salvation.

Therefore Jesus told Mary to deliver the news of His ascension in order to let the disciples know that the resurrection and salvation had been completed, to confirm to them that they had become the children of God, and to prepare them for the mission of preaching the gospel from then on. Mary went at once to the disciples and told them that she had seen the risen Lord and that He had spoken these words.

[Question] 6. John 20:19—why were the disciples gathered in one place on the evening of the day of the resurrection, with even the doors shut?

The disciples were hiding in one place with the doors firmly shut, because they were afraid of the Jews. Here, the Jews they feared refers to the religious leaders and their forces, who had taken the lead in seizing Jesus and crucifying Him. They could seize and kill even the disciples who had followed Jesus, treating them as the same group.

The shock and fear that the disciples felt were very great. Jesus, whom they had believed and followed as the Son of God and the Christ, had suddenly been arrested and died on the Cross, and the disciples themselves were in a situation where they could not know when they would be seized. They had heard from Mary Magdalene that Jesus had risen, but they did not yet fully understand the resurrection and had not escaped from fear. So they could not go outside, and were gathered together with the doors locked.

At that very moment, the risen Jesus appeared in their midst through the shut doors. And He said to the disciples, who were gripped by fear, *"Peace be with you,"* and showed them His hands and His side. The disciples confirmed the fact that their Teacher had actually risen again, and at last they rejoiced.

Jesus bore all their sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and then rose again from death. Therefore the peace that the disciples were to enjoy was not a peace obtained because the dangerous situation had disappeared, but the peace obtained because Christ, who overcame sin and death, was with them. Jesus came to the disciples, who were hiding in fear, gave them peace, and sent them into the world again to preach the gospel.

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[Question] 7. John 20:19—how should we understand that the risen Jesus was able to come into the room where the doors were shut?

Jesus was able to go into the place where the disciples were gathered without opening the shut doors, because He had put on not the weak body of flesh He had before He died, but the spiritual body that had risen from death. The risen body was a body that was not restricted by material barriers such as doors or walls. Therefore, even though the doors were firmly shut, Jesus could appear in the midst of the disciples.

Yet this does not mean that the risen body of Jesus was a formless spirit or a phantom. Jesus Himself showed the disciples His hands, which had been nailed to the Cross, and His side, which had been pierced by the spear. In the parallel account in Luke, He showed the disciples His hands and His feet and said, *"A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have,"* and He also ate broiled fish before them. The risen Jesus had a definite body, but that body was a spiritual and perfect body that was no longer bound by death or material limitations.

That Jesus passed through the shut doors and appeared shows that He is the Lord of life and the Christ, who overcame sin and death. Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and then actually rose again from death. The disciples saw the wounds in His hands and His side and confirmed the fact that the One standing before them was the very same Jesus who had died on the Cross.

This appearance also shows the resurrection body that the saints will put on in the future. Just as Jesus rose from death and put on a spiritual body, those who believe in His salvation will also rise again on the last day and put on an incorruptible and

immortal body. The event of His appearing without opening the shut doors reveals that the resurrection of Jesus is real, and reveals the power of God, which can give that life of the resurrection also to those who believe.

[Question] 8. John 20:19—what was the first word that Jesus proclaimed when He stood before the disciples after the resurrection?

The first word the risen Jesus spoke to the disciples was *"Peace be with you."*

At that time the disciples had the doors firmly shut, for fear that the Jews who had killed Jesus would seize and kill them too. Jesus appeared in the midst of such disciples, and did not begin with words of scolding or rebuke, but first of all proclaimed peace. Here, peace means peace of heart, calm, and rest.

This peace was not merely a comfort to calm the heart, nor a customary greeting of those days. Jesus bore all the sins of the disciples with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and then rose again from death. Therefore the word *"Peace be with you"* was the word telling them not to be afraid any longer, because sin had disappeared and they had been reconciled with God, and because Christ, who had overcome even death, was with them.

After Jesus showed them His hands and His side and confirmed to them that He had actually risen again, He said again, *"Peace to you!"* And He said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."* In this way the peace that Jesus gave became the power that raised the disciples up out of fear and made them go out into the world and preach the gospel.

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[Question] 9. John 20:21–23—what did Jesus first give to the disciples, who were being sent out into the world?

When Jesus sent the disciples into the world, He first gave them peace, made them receive the Holy Spirit, and gave them the authority to remit the sins of people through the gospel.

First, Jesus said, *"Peace be with you."* The disciples were afraid that those who had killed Jesus would seize them too. But the risen Jesus came to them and gave them the peace that is enjoyed because the Lord, who overcame sin and death, is with them. This peace was the starting point that enabled the disciples to overcome fear and go out into the world.

Second, Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit."* The disciples believed in the salvation that Jesus completed by bearing their sins with the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and then rising again. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to the disciples, who had received the remission of sins, so that they would realize the will of God and preach the gospel following His guidance. The disciples had to carry out their mission not by their own wisdom or ability, but by the guidance and work of the Holy Spirit.

Third, Jesus said, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."* This does not mean that the disciples forgive or condemn the sins of others by their own judgment. When the disciples preach the gospel that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection, those who hear that word and believe receive the remission of sins. On the contrary, for those who do not accept that gospel, sin remains as it is. This is the authority of the remission of sins entrusted to the disciples.

Therefore what Jesus gave the disciples was peace, the Holy Spirit, and the authority to preach the gospel of the remission of sins. Just as God the Father sent Jesus into the world to save sinners, Jesus, too, sent the disciples, equipped with these three things, into the world to preach the salvation He had completed.

[Question] 10. John 20:22—what does the act of the risen Jesus breathing on the disciples and then commanding them to receive the Holy Spirit reveal?

The risen Jesus *"breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"* The act of Jesus breathing on them reveals the fact that the risen Lord Himself gives the Holy Spirit to the disciples. This was not merely a symbol or a word announcing something to be accomplished in the future, but Jesus, who had completed salvation, actually giving the Holy Spirit as a gift to the disciples, who had received the remission of sins.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and bearing that sin, He was judged on the Cross and rose again from death. With this He settled the problem of sin, judgment, and death, and completed salvation. Therefore the risen Jesus was able to give the disciples peace, and was able to give the Holy Spirit to their hearts, which had been made clean. The resurrection of Jesus is the evidence that the salvation the disciples believed in is true and complete, and also the evidence that new life has been given to them.

The Holy Spirit is not something that a person obtains by his own effort, separately from the remission of sins. When one receives the remission of sins by believing in one's heart in the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, one also receives the Holy Spirit as a gift together with it. Acts 2:38 also says, *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* Because the disciples believed that Jesus is the Savior who completely removed their sins with the baptism He received from John, His Cross, and His resurrection, the risen Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit.

This word is also connected with the verses before and after it. Jesus first said, *"Peace be with you,"* and then said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."* Then He gave the Holy Spirit, and said, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them."* That is, He sent the disciples, who had received the remission of sins and peace and had received the Holy Spirit, into the world to preach the gospel of salvation that Jesus had completed.

Therefore, that Jesus breathed on them and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit,"* means the event in which the Lord, who completed salvation by the resurrection, gave the Holy Spirit and new life to the disciples, who had received the remission of sins, and sent them into the world as witnesses of the gospel. The disciples who received the Holy Spirit came to be sure of the salvation that Christ accomplished, and were entrusted with the mission of preaching the gospel of the remission of sins to people as they were led by the Holy Spirit. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The resurrection is new life, the hope and joy that God has given

< John 20:1-16 >

"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her,

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‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.’ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, ‘Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher).”

The place where human thoughts come to an end

It is so good that we can gather together like this after so long and worship together. All this time, each of you has worked hard in the place entrusted to you and served the Lord, and you have labored much. It is so good and I am so thankful to meet the male and female servants of God, the brothers and sisters, and all the workers like this.

Those who shared their testimony of salvation say that they thought a great deal. But it is said, *“To be carnally minded is death” (Romans 8:6)*. However much one thinks, receiving salvation is something that becomes possible when human thoughts have come to an end. It is something possible when one acknowledges Jesus as one’s God, and when one believes in the things that Jesus did when He came to this earth to save you and me from sin, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit; and that is how it actually came about. For a person to receive salvation is truly a hard thing. It is because a person is born as *“A brood of evildoers” (Isaiah 1:4)* and thoughts keep rising up without end. Why did philosophy come into being in this world?

Philosophy came into being because human beings think until they die, and religion came into being for the same reason. But what does not come to an end no matter how hard human beings try is sin. Because sin does not come to an end, they keep on thinking, and those thoughts come to an end when one acknowledges God and returns to the word of God. It is there that they come to an end; before that, one cannot put an end to them. It is because there is still more to think about and much that one does not know, so that one has to keep thinking until the moment one's life ends. That is why it is said, *"The law was our tutor to bring us to Christ" (Galatians 3:24)*. When one returns to Jesus Christ, everything comes to an end. The answer is there, and because Jesus Christ is the truth, it ends there, and our thoughts, too, are settled there.

So for us to give testimony that we have been saved is not a small thing. It is a great thing. Human thoughts sometimes seem all right, and a solution seems to appear, but those thoughts are not sustained, and after a little while they collapse again. Then one has to start over again, and when one has climbed up to a certain point, it collapses again, and one climbs up again. This is called a sandcastle. When Adam and Eve sinned and were driven out of the Garden of Eden, God said, *"In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you" (Genesis 3:17–18)*. It means that only when you have toiled to the point of death will you return before Me and acknowledge Me as your God, and only then will peace come upon your heart. So He made this world rough so that people would toil, and He made thorns and thistles. So it is not that human beings can carve out their own lives by making an effort. So to give a testimony of salvation, to give a testimony of salvation at a young age, is a great thing. The only reason one can do even that is that within the Church there is the word of

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God, there is the gospel, there is the truth, Jesus Christ is there, and the Holy Spirit is there; no matter what person appears on this earth, that person cannot do this. It is a truly thankful thing.

In the old days, I, too, always walked with my head bowed, because there was so much to think about. It was not just once or twice that I bumped into a utility pole while walking. Even when I bumped into a utility pole and muttered to myself and got angry, my thoughts did not come to an end. What am I, why was I born, for what was I born and where am I going, where is my final destination, how and for what should I live—this is the task of mankind. That is why it is said that all human beings are seekers who look for God, those who look for the way.

But Jesus Christ came to this earth and became the Savior of you and me. He said, *"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6),* and because He is telling us, "As your God, as your Savior, I put on human flesh and came to this earth, and for you I received baptism from John the Baptist and had your sins transferred to Me, and for you I was nailed to the Cross and died, and I rose again from death and saved you; I am your God and your Savior," we receive salvation by acknowledging that Jesus Christ. So all the tribulations and sufferings we undergo on this earth are one process for us to meet the Lord, and an indispensable link. There are thoughts like "Why am I like this?" and many kinds of problems, but in the midst of them God is trying to meet you, and they become the way by which we can meet God. You must know that this is so.

Otherwise, a human being is truly a lost person. If one does not meet that shepherd, who is the King of love and the shield in tribulation, if one does not acknowledge that God, if one does not acknowledge that that God has become the Savior of you and me, one's heart becomes hell. Not hell after going to hell, but

one's heart becomes hell on this earth, the peace of heart does not come, and every single day is anxious at all times. That is why it is so good to hear you give your testimonies and to hear your praises. Praise is better than preaching five hundred sermons. It is because that praise is the testimony of you and me and the confession of our faith. Before I came into this church, I looked around the surroundings, and I truly felt that this is the city of God. In here the righteous live, serve the gospel, send out booklets, and live for the Lord. Both I and you have come into this church because God has led us, and He has loved us and blessed us. You and I are miracles. Countless people seek God and yet cannot meet Him, but God has placed us in the Church and met us.

The empty tomb and the risen Lord

A short while ago, there was a Sunday that we observed as Easter. But to the people of the world, Easter has nothing to do with them. Of course, they too will rise again. The righteous rise first, and a thousand years later they too rise again, but for what does He raise them again? God raises them again in order to judge them and put them into the fire that is not quenched. People sing that Jesus has risen again. He has indeed risen, but is there peace and tranquility in their hearts? With sin in them, what does the resurrection of Jesus have to do with them?

When we look at this word, our Lord appeared on the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene had been one who was demon-possessed, but she was a person who had believed in Jesus as her Lord, as God. So when Jesus died, she was so sad that she went to the tomb. From sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday— After Jesus died on Friday and the Sabbath had passed, she went to the

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tomb early on Sunday, the third day, and the stone that had blocked the entrance of the tomb had been rolled away and moved to the side. That stone was not a stone that could be moved by the strength of one strong man, but a stone that could be moved only when several people moved it together. Startled, she looked into the tomb, and the body was not there. Startled, she ran in a fluster and told Peter and the other disciple that the body of the Lord was gone, and the disciples, too, came running and looked in. Peter, being hot-tempered, went even into the tomb, and the body really was not there. But when he went and looked, the handkerchief that had been around His head was folded neatly, as one folds clothes. The handkerchief that had been around His head was folded neatly, and the linen cloths that had wrapped His whole body were also lying there in order. If someone had taken the body away, he would have just carried it off as it was, so could it have been folded?

Jesus had risen again, and at the head and at the feet of the place where the body had lain, there were two angels. As Mary was weeping, an angel asked, *"Woman, why are you weeping?" (John 20:13)* and Mary said that people had taken away the body of our Lord, and that she wished they would tell her where they had put Him. As she said this, she looked behind her, and Jesus was standing there, but Mary thought He was the gardener. Only when Jesus called her, *"Mary!" (John 20:16)*, did she recognize Him and say, *"Rabboni!" (John 20:16)*, that is, Teacher. Because He had risen again, He no longer had that haggard and wretched appearance. There were the marks of the nails in His hands and the mark of the spear in His side, but He did not have that haggard appearance. Jesus said, *"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father" (John 20:17)*, and Mary went out and told the disciples that she had met Jesus, and that Jesus had risen again. This is the scene of this word.

The curse of death and the resurrection

Human beings go through birth, aging, sickness, and death. They are born, grow up receiving the love of their parents, grow old, fall sick, and die of that sickness. That is why people say that life is vain, and that art is long and life is short. There is so much to do, but just when they are finally able to do it—when they know the world and know people and are finally able to do a little—the time comes for them to fall sick and die. How vain is that? The most miserable thing in life is death. There is nothing more miserable than that. In this world there was a beautiful life too, there were joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure, there were experiences and failures, and there is much to do in the future, but just when they are finally coming to know something and coming to their senses, they fall sick and die. So death is a curse to human beings. It is because when one dies, only the judgment of God remains and it is over. Though for those who have received the remission of sins it is fortunate, since they go to heaven. So what I want to speak about today is the resurrection. What is the resurrection? To live again, to obtain new life—this is the resurrection.

Our receiving the remission of sins is that we become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by acknowledging Jesus as our God, acknowledging that He has saved us, acknowledging our sinful state, and believing that He became our Savior and removed all the sins of you and me. So our hearts escape from sin and we become the children of God. Then do we not die? When we grow old, we too fall sick and die. Though people do not say so, everyone's body is not well. So we too die, and because that death is miserable, our Lord came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore that sin of the world and

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was nailed to the Cross and died for us, and then rose again. The Lord rose again in order to give us new life.

The things the Lord did when He came to this earth are all for you and me. That He put on human flesh and came as a human being, that He came as the Savior, that He received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, that He bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross and died for us, that He went into the tomb for us, that He rose again from death—all this is for you and me. The Lord rose again in order to give new life to you and me. The Lord did not simply rise again; He rose again because He is the Creator and the Lord of life. *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5)*. That He came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, and was hung on the Cross and went to His death was to pay the price of the sins of you and me and to remove our sins. But His resurrection was to give new life to you and me.

As I have walked this way together with the elderly, and as I myself have experienced much of my body being unwell, I have seen people lose their strength and pass away. It means that although they look like that now, if that person is a born-again person, it does not end forever with death like that, but just as the Lord rose again, He gives new life and raises that person again. *"As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*. After that, there is the resurrection for us. Only when there is a rising again is there something to judge and something to be judged, and is there eternal life. It means that He gives us new life, with which we can live forever.

The joy of new life

Since the Lord gives new life, the joy and delight of that new life is like all things in heaven and earth springing to life in springtime, like sprouting new buds again and holding a feast of new life, like giving a great performance—there is that kind of joy. How good it is that He gives new life and raises us again! The Lord rose again in order to do that. *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25–26)*. It means that He gives us new life that never dies forever. He gives us life just like His own. Our bodies die once and it is over, but He gives us new life and clothes us with a body that never dies again. So because the Lord has given us this new life, we have succeeded. There is no one as blessed as we are. We are truly tremendously blessed people. My body, too, keeps getting worse, so that if I do a little work, my hands tremble and my body trembles, and it is hard even to eat. But the reason I am all right in spite of that is that I have new life, and the Lord will raise me again. That is why there is new hope.

"Abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). Faith speaks of our salvation, the love of God speaks of that love with which our God never forsakes us forever, and hope speaks of hope. It means that He has given us new life. It does not end with death. You and I, the righteous, take part in the first resurrection. How amazing a thing is this? Because it is a matter of taking part in the first resurrection, even if we go after doing all the work we have to do on this earth, it will never be miserable. There is no greater joy than this, and there is no greater glory than this. The glory of those who have received new life from God is the glory of heaven. They have been clothed with the glory of living forever

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with God as the children of God. Therefore this is a greater feast than any performance, than any feast. The greatest blessing that God has given to human beings is this new life. God saved us from sin in order to give new life to you and me.

That is why the Apostle Paul said, *"We do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16)*. Truly, we are not frustrated or in despair because of the outward man. It is that God has given us something truly precious, that He has given us new life. When we were saved from sin, we were thankful for that, and as we did the work of God and preached the gospel to other souls, we were so thankful; but now it is, "This is truly a great thing; the Lord came to you and me and saved us in order to give us this new life." It means that He made us believe in and serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit in order to give new life to dying souls. What I am telling you is that you and I are exactly such people, people who have received such a blessing. Do you believe so?

Who is there whose outward man does not perish? Who is there without worries? If we think according to the flesh, there are always things to worry about and there is despair. But when our life comes to an end, He gives us new life and makes us escape completely from suffering in oppression, worry, and instability. Just as, with the coming of autumn and winter, the flowers and buds all seem to have died and even their forms disappear, but because the roots are alive, when spring comes new shoots come up again and flowers bloom—you and I are like that. Because the Lord has given us new life, we will surely rise again and live enjoying glory and enjoying eternal life in the kingdom of the Lord. So when we think of this resurrection, the resurrection of the Lord is for you and me. The things He did when He came to this earth are all things He did for you and me. That is why the

righteous are not afraid of death. In the days of the early Church, Christians sang praises even as they were being martyred in the amphitheaters of Rome. Would they have sung praises out of bravado? I believe that they sang praises because they believed that even if they died now, they would rise again, since the Lord had given them new life. When one is scared to death, when beasts are attacking and killing, what is there to be glad about that praise would come out? It is more terrifying to watch the person next to you being killed than to die oneself. Yet praise came out because their companions who were being killed now would obtain new life and bloom again like flowers, and would reign with Jesus Christ forever in the kingdom of God, rule over angels, and enjoy eternal life without lack. That is why they could praise and could exhort those beside them, and because they too were such people, they could die singing praises.

I do not want to tell a grand story now. What I want to say is this: the Lord has given new life to you and me, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so we, as those who have obtained new life, live again. When we actually trace it back, human effort can never reach salvation, however much one tries. Since one cannot obtain salvation no matter how hard one tries, one simply acknowledges God, acknowledges the law of God, goes to Jesus Christ, and receives salvation by believing that Jesus Christ has saved you and me, and one must believe that He is the God of you and me. But when we know, when we believe, that He has given us an amazing blessing, we can live without being servile even while living on this earth, and we can live in hope. How miserable is a person without hope? When one works oneself to the bone and wonders what will become of one in the end, when one is sick and is now about to die, how despairing and hopeless it is? How worried one is about who will look after one's children? I know it well, because I am a person who has been sick.

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Meeting the Lord in the face of death

When I was young, I caught tuberculosis. In those days, I thought that sleeping in a room under a blanket was shameful for a real man, so it was a matter of pride to go and lie down and sleep in places like the mountains or a public cemetery, and I made bets at night and acted with bravado, and I was not afraid even of things like ghosts. My body was weak, but I treated it recklessly, and so tuberculosis broke out. Its symptoms began to appear, and when I woke up from sleep the bedding was all soaked, but I let it pass. Then one day, as I was walking, blood gushed up from my throat as if a spring had burst. When I spat it out, it was blood, and after it came up several times, the strength went out of my lower body and I collapsed. Among individuals infected with the tuberculosis bacterium, there are cases where the bacteria remain dormant and then progress to active tuberculosis when the immune system weakens. So as a result, the reason I came to believe in Jesus was the thought that since I had tuberculosis and would do harm to others, it would be better to go early, and that before going, there was just one thing I wanted to settle and then go. They said that Jesus removed sin, so I went to say, “I do not know well who You are, but if You just remove my sin, I will go without regret.” But once I had said those words, hope welled up in my heart. After that I believed in Jesus, and ten years later I met the Lord through the word of God. When I met the Lord, I came to preach this gospel to you, and I am still preaching it now, and now I see that I have obtained new life.

Of course, in the old days too, I observed Resurrection Sunday many times, and I fully believed that just as the Lord rose again, we too rise again. But what I believed then and now are very different. Before I was born again, I knew that there is

a resurrection and said that I believed it, but I believed it on my own, and in reality the resurrection belongs to those who are born again. It is that there is new life. We rise again. We are not those who will fall down and be completely ruined. Although our flesh goes through birth, aging, sickness, and death, there is a rising again. That is why I met the Lord, and having met the Lord, I obtained new life. Even now, after my body has been sick, my heart sinks a great deal. Everyone is like that. Nevertheless, the Lord has given me new life, and I will rise again; that is why I have hope. When I am sick, I set my expectation that God will either heal me or give me good medicine, and I pray, and I believe, and I live. From birth my constitution was not good, so when I was young I was half dead, and after I passed thirty, all the joints of my bones ached so that I could not live. The hospitals could not treat it, and I spent the time trying this and that folk remedy, and before I knew it, without my even realizing it, the aching of my joints disappeared. That is how I met the Lord, and now I am living well with you. As the saying goes, “The frail live to a hundred”; I am still frail, but I still have much work to do. I have much to do with you, much to do for you, and much to do in preaching the gospel.

Seen from the world’s point of view, we are very lacking. Nevertheless, we preach the gospel to the whole world. Having a fine-looking exterior is not the actual content. How much substance there is inside is what is real. So our workers did not put their strength into decorating the exterior, but each did a great deal of the work entrusted to him. There is nothing to boast of as having done well, but we make our efforts diligently. Also, I think that if, when our circumstances allow, we take care of the elderly in need around us, and if we do not just tell people with words to listen to the gospel but simply help them as we work, the gospel might be preached through that as well. But that is

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only my thought, and what is clear when I look at you and when I think of myself is that we have obtained new life. The Lord has clearly risen again. We, too, rise again. We rise again with a good resurrection. We have obtained new life, in which we obtain eternal life and go to the kingdom of the Lord and live forever together with our God. I believe that you and I have received such a blessing. I believe that just as the Lord rose again, I too rise again and you too rise again. Do you believe?

Give thanks because there is the resurrection

How many things are there that are discouraging and disappointing as we live on this earth? If there were no resurrection, what we believe would be nothing, what we serve would be nothing, and having received the remission of sins would be nothing. If it ends with death, it is nothing. It is good because there is a living again. Because we live again, and live together with the Lord forever, because it is eternal life, we are truly thankful. The resurrection is better even than the delight of a grand and beautiful piece performed by a great orchestra. Having obtained new life—this is the victory of our faith, the victory of everything, and success. There is no greater blessing than this. The greatest blessing among all we have received is having obtained new life, and going to the kingdom of God and living together there. We rise again with bodies and souls that never die forever, that are not harmed, that do not fall sick, that do not perish, that are in a state without worry and without lack, and that are not ruled by the devil nor deceived by him. God has given such a blessing to you and me. That is why I say we are thankful.

So let us live with bright faces. When we look at ourselves

and our bodies are sick, things look gloomy, and despair comes, thinking, "I am this sick, so what good is it if the gospel is preached?"—but there is no despair. As it is said that flowers bloom even in a field that a storm has passed over, and springs gush up even in a place that an earthquake has passed through, we are blessed people. We were born on this earth and went through many hardships, but in the end we met the Lord and believed in the Lord, and now He has let us know that the Lord has given us new life. *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).* We can understand the reason the Lord said so. I hope that you will not be discouraged. I hope that you will look to the Lord. I, too, look to Him. I can by no means say that I am healthier than you, but I am always joyful. It is good that the work we do is of help in preaching the gospel, but however much we have, the things of this earth are good because we can use them as the ground for our work; can they fill our hearts completely? It is because there is the resurrection we have received from the Lord, because there is new life, that it is good for us.

When I meet the brothers whose bodies are unwell and shake hands with them, their grip is stronger than I expected, and I am so thankful for that, and I am so thankful that the children are here with us, too. I preach sermons and preach the gospel, but it is also good to meet like this on a human level, and it is good to give and receive comfort from one another. Let us be thankful that the Lord has given new life to you and me, keep this firmly in mind and remember it, and live the rest of our lives well, always believing, looking to Him, and giving thanks. I give thanks that our Lord has given us new life, and I pray that He will also save the lost souls and give new life to them as well. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

There is no greater blessing than the resurrection

< John 20:1-18 >

"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where

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they have laid Him.' Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."' Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her."

On this earth we are imperfect beings who look toward death

The Lord came to this earth, had the sin of mankind transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us, mankind, from sin. After He had our sins transferred to Him like that, He died hung on the Cross, and this word is the event that took place at dawn on Sunday, on the third day after He died. *"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him'" (John 20:1–2)*. Since it is the first day of the week, it is Sunday morning.

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The resurrection is actually recorded here. The resurrection means dying and living again, and it is a fact. Jesus rose again like this. But what about you and me? Our lives go through birth, aging, sickness, and death. We are born, grow old, fall sick, and die. When a person grows old and falls sick and the time comes to die, he becomes very haggard. He becomes haggard because all the vital fluids in his body have been drained out, and when we look at human life, it is truly pitiful. Childhood may be all right, but when people grow old and the time comes to die, animals, human beings, and plants all alike wither and look miserable. That is why people feel that life is vain.

But even though a person withers like that, if he lives again after death, how great a hope would that be? If there is a living again after death, there is nothing as beautiful as that and no blessing as great as that. It is because one becomes new. If a person dies and lives again and lives forever, where is there anything more beautiful than that, and where is there anything more perfect than that? Why is it perfect? It is because now there is no more death. If there is death, one remains as one is in imperfection, but when one has died and lived again and obtained new life, there is nothing imperfect. But how imperfect is our life now? People sometimes make absurd mistakes, as if they had lost their minds. That is why it seems we have to live together. When one person is not in his right mind, the person who is in his right mind helps him. How sad, how despairing, and how discouraging it would be if this imperfect life of ours came to an end! Death is the final discouragement and despair of everything. Ordinary people think that when they die it is over, and so they choose death so easily, but it does not end with death. Because human beings resemble the image of God, they are beings who live forever. Either they go to heaven and live forever or they go to hell and live forever; they live forever in

one of the two. That living forever means that there is new life. That is why the Lord rose again after that death.

The empty tomb and the folded linen cloths

Mary Magdalene was a woman who had once been demon-possessed, but she met Jesus and was healed. In the Bible there are many Marys. The mother of Jesus in the flesh is also Mary, and there are other Marys, too. This woman watched everything, up to when Jesus died and was brought down from the Cross covered in blood, wrapped in linen cloths, and put into the tomb, and then she went back, and when the Sabbath had passed, on the first day of the week, she came to the tomb. When she came and looked, the door of the tomb was open. The tombs of the Jews are different. They hollow out a large rock and make a space of about seven to ten square meters inside it, and when someone in their family dies, they bring him there either together with a coffin or with just the body wrapped up, and they block the entrance by rolling a large stone in front of it so that animals cannot get in. If it is left like that, the body assimilates with the air and rots completely, leaving only the bones, and then when someone else in the family dies, they open that stone door and put him into that tomb. And even that rock tomb was a tomb used only by the rich, and those who were not rich sometimes used caves.

When Mary Magdalene went and looked, the stone of the rock tomb had been rolled to the side, and when she looked inside, the body was not there. Startled, she came running and told Peter and the disciples of Jesus. Peter was hot-tempered, and the Apostle John, too, was originally a hot-tempered person, enough to have the nickname *"Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17)*.

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They ran a race, and the younger disciple ran faster and went and looked, and the body of Jesus was not there. When he looked carefully, there was the white shroud that had wrapped the body—the linen cloths, which, to put it in our way of speaking, are like bandages. There was one part that had wrapped the head and a long one that had wrapped the whole body, and these had been folded neatly.

Since the body was not there, Mary Magdalene wept, wondering whether someone had stolen the body of the One she loved so much. As she was looking into the tomb and weeping, two angels in white were at the head and at the feet of the place where the body of Jesus had lain. When an angel asked, *"Woman, why are you weeping?" (John 20:13)* she said that someone had stolen the body of our Lord. As she said this, she looked behind her, and Jesus was standing there and called her, *"Mary!" (John 20:16)*. Mary, startled, said, *"Rabboni!" (John 20:16)*, that is, Teacher, and Jesus said, *"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father" (John 20:17)*, and told her to go and tell the brethren. It means that Jesus had risen again. If we had not been born again, this would be a story like a fairy tale, with no meaning at all. But this is a fact. Why is it a fact? It is because, just as the sin in our hearts disappeared when we saw, heard, and believed the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this actually comes to those who have received the remission of sins.

When the righteous die, they are sometimes buried in a tomb and sometimes cremated, but in the end the Lord raises them again. It means that they obtain new life again. Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25)*. It means that He gives new life. It means that just as He rose again, He also raises us who believe in Jesus Christ. Before I was born again, when I was living a religious life within Christianity, this resurrection was

very hard for me to understand. Since I could not understand it well, I had no choice but to just believe it, so I said I believed, but it did not feel real. But now it feels real. After I was born again, it touches my heart that "Truly, just as the Lord rose again, He gives new life to us too; we, too, rise again." Because there is faith in my heart, I am not afraid of death. It means that when we die, we obtain new life and rise again, so we are not afraid. Just as in the days of the early Church, the born-again saints met death praising God even as they were martyred by beasts in the amphitheaters of Rome, it means that death is really not fearful. For those who are born again, whether you believe it or not, there is the resurrection. They actually rise again. It is said, *"As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*, and it means that one dies once but rises again. Because we actually rise again, there is hope and there is expectation. So when the righteous die and we hold their funerals, we do not grieve so much. It is because they rise again.

Everything the Lord did is for us

Today is the day we observe as Resurrection Sunday. Physically, we are marking Easter as a festival, and spiritually, with our hearts, we listen to the word and believe that Jesus rose again, that He died and lived again. That Jesus put on human flesh and came to this earth is for you and me; that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him was to have the sins of you and me transferred to Him; that Jesus bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood was in place of the death of you and me; and that Jesus rose again from death was to give new life to you and me. So the things He did when He came to

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this earth are all things He did for you and me who believe. I believe that. That is why, as I mark this Easter, I am so thankful, and I have a heart that is so thankful before the Lord, who has given us new life.

Let us read the word. "*The handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed" (John 20:7–8)*. What is so great about this? It is that the linen cloths that had wrapped the body were folded. The body had been wrapped in white cloth and the head had been wrapped in another cloth, and the story is that these were folded, just as we fold clothes neatly after we wash them. But when the disciples saw that, they believed, "Jesus has risen again!" When we read it, we wonder what kind of evidence of the resurrection that could be. Whether this word were there or not, I believe that the Lord rose again, and I also believe that I myself will die and live again. I believe that you, too, even if you die, will live again, that you will rise with the resurrection of eternal life, a good resurrection.

But let us think about it once. Why is it a great thing that the handkerchief that covered the head and the large shroud that wrapped the whole body were folded? What happened to Jesus when He was hung on the Cross? Nails were driven in, the crown of thorns was put on Him so that blood ran down from His head, and His whole body was covered with wounds. His whole body was struck with the whips of the Romans. That whip was not an ordinary whip; things like lead or nails were attached to its ends, so that when it struck, it wrapped around the body, and when it came loose, the nails tore out pieces of flesh. So His whole body was torn open and blood was everywhere. The crown of thorns was put on His head, and blood flowed so much that it ran onto

the dirt on the ground. Moreover, since nails were driven into both hands and both feet, it means that all the blood in His heart came out. Only then does one die. A person hung on a cross dies after pouring out all his blood. Because all His blood was gone, He said, *"I thirst!" (John 19:28)* and people mixed something like an anesthetic that removes pain and makes one die quickly and gave it to Him, but Jesus only tasted it and did not drink it. His whole body was covered in blood, so how well could they have wiped Him after He died? Even if they wiped Him, would blood not have kept coming out from inside His body? Since the body was wrapped in cloth, how much blood would have soaked into it? And three days passed. For an ordinary person, the body would already have rotted, pus and discharge would have come out, and even if one tried to take off the cloth, it would have stuck to the flesh and become one with it and rotted together with it, so that it could not be taken off. You may not know this well, since you have not handled corpses much, but I have seen such things.

So when the disciples saw the handkerchief and the white cloth folded cleanly, they believed, "Jesus has risen again!" That is the difference between the disciples who were on the scene and us. If Jesus had not risen again with a new and perfect body, and the cloth that had wrapped Him had been taken off the body that had originally died, the wounded body caked with blood, then pieces of flesh would have stuck to it as well. But because that cloth had been left very clean, the disciples believed. I believe even though I have not seen such things. A born-again person believes the word of God. Why is that? It is believed because the Holy Spirit is in his heart. With the head, it is hard to understand. But a born-again person believes it with his heart. But a person who is not born again believes if it can be understood with the head, but does not believe with the heart.

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Because he does not believe with the heart, it is hard. Truly believing with the heart is true faith.

On this Easter, the Lord is preaching to us the good news that He has given us new life. We, too, as we serve the Lord and work, will grow old and fall sick and go before the Lord. We do not know when it will be, but if going were the end, how vain would it be? It means that we obtain new life again and live again. We live with a perfect body. The disciples had locked the door of the house they were in, but Jesus appeared inside it. He appeared by passing through the wall. It is that we obtain new life and live with that spiritual body, a body that never dies again and never falls sick. Because it does not fall sick, we can live forever in the kingdom of God. It means that He has given us new life like that—not a body of flesh like this, but a body that does not fall sick, a body that can go anywhere it wishes. So how can we not be thankful? That is why I am so thankful.

We who have been born again by believing in the water and the Spirit also live again

People preach all kinds of sermons at Easter. But the most important thing is whether you and I live again. What could be more important than you and me living? It is that you and I live again. I do not regard death as despair. This world is increasingly becoming a world where people cannot live, whether because of natural disasters, or the state of people's hearts, or the economy, or politics. Still, at any rate, what we must surely hear and remember as we mark this Easter is that the Lord has given us new life, and that just as the Lord rose again, you and I will surely rise again. Among resurrections, too, there is a good resurrection and a bad resurrection. It is shown in the Book of

Revelation that the born-again rise first, and a thousand years later the sinners are raised and all put into the fire that is not quenched at the great white throne judgment. That is why we speak of the Millennial Kingdom. The concept of reward, in which we labor on this earth and are rewarded, is possible only during those thousand years, and after that it is the same eternal life for all.

How good it would be if I rise again and you rise again! These days there are many people who are sick. I, too, have a very hard time. How sad it would be if we really lived this hard and then died and it was over? Because there is a living again, there is hope and expectation, and because there is a living forever, despair departs. It is like darkness retreating because there is light. It is a truly thankful thing.

You, too, believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Believe it in the present tense. There is no other gospel. Believing only in the blood of the Cross—there is no such thing. Even when Jesus died hung on the Cross, He died insisting on this point. Hung on the Cross, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and died, and when people pierced His side with a long spear to confirm His death, it is written, *"Pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34)*. The Lord showed it to those who believe in Jesus until the very end. It means that a person must believe in the water and the Spirit to be born again, that one must surely be born again of water and the Spirit, just as He said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*.

Jesus put on human flesh and came to this earth for you and me; He received baptism from John the Baptist in order to have the sins of you and me and all mankind transferred to Him; He was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and went to His death in

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order to undergo in our place the death we had to undergo because of our sins; and He rose again from death and lived again for you and me. That is why the gospel of the water and the Spirit is surely the gospel of the truth, and a life of new life awaits everyone who believes. The gospel of the blood, which is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit but merely says that He died on the Cross shedding His blood, is religion. Religion is something that human beings have made up with their own thoughts and hold on to. To make up with one's own thoughts and believe that Jesus is my Savior and died for me on the Cross is religion. To think that there is a Buddha who will help me is something human beings have made up with their thoughts—that is religion. What we believe is faith. To look up to what God has done and believe according to His plan—that is faith.

So what we must keep in mind is not to say that one obtains salvation by believing only in the blood of the Cross. Such faith has nothing to do with the resurrection of Jesus. One goes to hell and takes part in the second resurrection. There is no faith in the heart, and sin simply remains in oneself. However much one says one has no sin, one is bound by sin again. There is no hope or expectation of rising again. The resurrection is something that comes only to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe in the remission of sins in the present tense, and have received the remission of sins by the faith of their hearts. It is to live again. When we have risen again, to live forever together with God, without our bodies ever falling sick or being killed again, is the new second life of the resurrection. God came to us on this earth in order to give us this resurrection. If there were no resurrection, believing in Jesus would be nothing, and having received the remission of sins would be nothing. There is the resurrection, there is a living again.

I believe in the resurrection. That is why I am very hopeful.

My body is not very hopeful, but my heart is tremendously hopeful. I live for the gospel while I am alive, and I go when the Lord calls me, but will I go right away? I have much to do for you. I have to provide workplaces, I have to preach the gospel to the world, and I have to keep publishing books to show our fellow workers overseas that this author is alive. The difference between when an author is alive and after he has died is as great as the difference between heaven and earth.

These days there are many sick people, and I am so thankful that there is the resurrection, and it is so good to mark this Easter. When I think that I will live again forever, how good it is! Now is not your prime. When I die and live again, it will be eternal youth. A youth that does not die, a youth that does not fall sick, eternal youth. Just as Jesus is alive even now, I, too, am alive and you, too, are alive. So to have received the remission of sins is to have received an enormous blessing. That you have taken part in this means that you obtain new life, so you are in a tremendously blessed position. Whether you think so or not, from where I see it, it is enormous. Are you perhaps in despair because you are well on in years and sickness has come upon your body? Then you will go while serving the Lord. Then you live again. We obtain new life and, just as the Lord rose again, we too rise again. So we come to live well with God forever. I give thanks before the Lord, who has given us such salvation and given us new life. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

We are those who have been established as little apostles

< John 20:1-23 >

"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.' Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her,

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'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God."' Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'"

Mary Magdalene, who came to the empty tomb

"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had

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been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him'" (John 20:1–2). In this way a commotion arose. Jesus died hung on the Cross and went into the tomb at about three o'clock on Friday afternoon, and after Saturday had passed, at early dawn on Sunday, while it was still dark because morning had not yet come, Mary came to the tomb of Jesus. It seems she came alone in the dark. Since it was frightening, no one else would have come. When she came to the tomb and looked, the body had been put inside a rock tomb and a large stone had been placed outside to block it, but that stone had been rolled to the side. Startled, she went and told Peter and another disciple, that is, the disciple who seems to be the Apostle John. She said that the door of the tomb was open and that it seemed people had moved the body of Jesus. Peter and John ran as soon as they heard the story, and since John was very young and Peter was old, John went and saw first. The door of the tomb was open, and when he looked inside, the body of Jesus was not there. He saw the white linen cloths lying there but did not go into the tomb, while Peter, the hot-blooded one who came running later, went straight in and looked at the place where the body of Jesus had been, and the body was not there. These two went back, and Mary Magdalene, who had followed behind, wept, saying that the body of Jesus was gone, and looked into the tomb.

"She saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him'" (John 20:12–13). It seems that Mary Magdalene had received special love from Jesus. After Jesus

died hung on the Cross, the other disciples were afraid and did not come to the tomb. Who would go to a tomb at early dawn? But it seems that Mary went in order to put spices on the body of Jesus. In fact, how great a shock the disciples of Jesus must have received! When He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, "Wait here a moment; I will go over there and pray to the Father and come back," but the disciples, tired from walking a long way, fell asleep. Jesus prayed, *"Not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39),* and came back and admonished them, *"Could you not watch with Me one hour?" (Matthew 26:40)* and went to pray again and came back again, and the third time, too, He went once more and entrusted Himself to the will of the Father, and when He turned back, Judas came with the Roman soldiers, holding clubs and torches, seized Jesus, and handed Him over to the court of Pilate.

Jesus was tried in the court of Pilate, went to Herod and was tried again, and after going back and forth, finally Pilate questioned Him and tried to release Him. But the Jews cried out, *"If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend" (John 19:12)*. Caesar was the emperor of Rome. A riot was about to break out, and if a riot broke out because he had not ordered Jesus to be crucified, the responsibility would be his, so Pilate handed down the death sentence, and washing his hands he said, *"I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it" (Matthew 27:24),* and saying that he had only done it because they kept demanding that he release the robber Barabbas to them and crucify Jesus, he went inside. From then on, Jesus went up Mount Golgotha, was laid on the cross and nailed to it, the cross was raised up, and He died because of the blood He shed there. One of the robbers nailed to the crosses on either side of Jesus said, *"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42),* and Jesus said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you*

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will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43), and on the Cross He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and breathed His last.

The tomb was one that a man named Joseph of Arimathea gave, his own tomb. Rock tombs are used by the rich. Without money, one cannot use a rock tomb. He was nailed to the Cross and died on Friday afternoon, and after Saturday had passed, at dawn on Sunday, on the day He had promised He would rise again three days after His death, Mary Magdalene appears. How great must the shock of the disciples of Jesus have been at this time! He was their Teacher; when He preached the word, He preached such words of truth; He performed the power of wonders and miracles, so that even without cooking, when Jesus gave thanks, food appeared; and so they had listened well to the word and lived well, when one day, suddenly, the Roman soldiers and Judas came to arrest Him, took Him away, and nailed Him to the Cross and killed Him. Because the disciples had never thought that Jesus would die, they had prepared neither a tomb nor a shroud. Joseph of Arimathea, who was a member of the Jewish council, asked for the body of Jesus, laid Him to rest in the tomb he had prepared for himself, and went back. The disciples of Jesus were not there when Jesus was buried. If they had seized and killed even Jesus, would they have let the disciples live? How frightened they must have been! That is how the disciples met the death of their Teacher. While things were like that, Mary Magdalene came out of breath at dawn on Sunday and told Peter that the tomb was open and it seemed someone had taken the body of Jesus, and Peter and John ran and checked, and seeing that the body really was not there, they went back to their own homes.

But when Mary Magdalene, who had followed behind, wept in front of the rock tomb, saying that she did not know who had taken the body of our Lord, and looked into the rock tomb, there

were angels there. One angel was sitting at the head of Jesus and one angel at the feet, and when the angels said, *"Woman, why are you weeping?" (John 20:13)*, Mary said, *"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him" (John 20:13)*. When she had said this, she looked behind her, and Jesus was standing there, but she did not recognize Jesus, and she said, "If you have taken Him away, tell me, and I will go and get Him." But when Jesus called her, *"Mary!" (John 20:16)*, because that voice was exactly the same as His voice when He was alive, Mary was startled and, glad to see Him, tried to touch Him, but Jesus said, *"Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'" (John 20:17)*. That is, Mary Magdalene went to the disciples and told them this story.

"My Father and your Father"

Here there is one thing we must point out before we go on. Jesus said, *"Go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'" (John 20:17)*. If He had said only that He was ascending to His Father, we could think of it that way, but that He said "My Father and your Father" means that Jesus identified the disciples and Mary Magdalene with Himself. Jesus is the Son of God the Father. So He is saying that the disciples and Mary Magdalene are those who are in the same position as Himself. How could Jesus say such a thing? Because Jesus came to this earth and was born, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, went to the Cross and died, and rose again like this and removed all the sin of those

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who believe in Jesus, now that He had risen from death, when He faced Mary Magdalene He was not facing a sinner but facing a child of God—that is what it means. That is why He spoke identifying them with Himself, saying that He was ascending to "My God and your God, My Father and your Father." This is a great thing. The One who is the exceedingly high Creator and our Savior told her to say that He was ascending to "My God and your God, My Father and your Father," and Mary Magdalene went at once to the disciples and told them. Because Jesus had saved us, He told Mary that she was a person in exactly the same position as Himself. He said this because, while He was living on this earth, Jesus had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, also received the judgment for sin on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us.

Those who are sent—apostles

Jesus showed Himself first to Mary Magdalene, and second He appeared to the disciples. *"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (John 20:19–23).*

The first day of the week is, to put it in our way of speaking, Sunday. On Sunday evening, the disciples had the doors firmly

shut and bolted in the place where they were gathered for fear of the Jews, when Jesus appeared in the middle of the room, said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, and showed them His hands and His side. Because there were the places where the nails had been driven in, the disciples came to know that Jesus had risen again. The disciples had been hiding because there was fear in their hearts, but the moment they heard the word, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, peace came upon their hearts. The fear retreated from their hearts and they became very calm. Next, Jesus said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*. It means: just as God the Father sent Me from heaven to this earth and had Me do the work of saving sinners from sin, so I also send you into this world.

The word apostle means one who is sent. That Peter is an apostle means that he is one who was sent by God, one who was sent into this world by God. Long ago, the leader of a certain group once asked me whether I thought of him as an apostle. So I said, "I do not think so; the word apostle means one who is sent by God, and I do not think of you, Pastor, as one whom God has sent." That person was so startled that he could not even speak. I did that because such things must be spoken accurately, and so I was hated as well. He wanted me to say words that would exalt him, and because I did not, I was hated.

And Jesus *"breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22)*. The reason Jesus is saying this word now is that God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who know and believe that Jesus is the Savior. In the Acts of the Apostles, Peter, too, says, *"For the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)*. Because the disciples of Jesus had received the remission of sins, Jesus rose again and told them to receive the Holy Spirit, and He actually gave them the Holy Spirit. But the disciples did not know well what this

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meant. And the word He went on to say was, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23)*. This word means that Jesus, saying to the disciples, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*, was going to go to God the Father, leaving the disciples on this earth. In this world, He had the apostles preach the gospel. It means that when the apostles, having believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and received the Holy Spirit, now preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people, then if the people accept and believe the gospel they preach, they receive the remission of sins.

The authority to remit sins

"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them" (John 20:23) means that they have received the authority to remit sins. That is what apostles are. The word apostle means that one has received the authority to remit sins. But those who persecute the apostles and do not believe the word they preach—such people cannot receive the remission of sins. Sin comes to remain as it is in their hearts. This word is not saying that pastors or Catholic priests have received the authority to remit the sins of church members. They have absolutely no authority to remit the sin of people. When they themselves have sin in their hearts, how could they remove the sin of others? In the Catholic Church, when the believers come and confess their sins through confession, the priest says, "I remit your sins," and they say that the believer has received the remission of sins. But however much one goes to confession, sin does not disappear.

That Jesus here said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*,

and said, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23)*, means that if one does not preach the gospel to the other person, he cannot believe, and that even when the gospel is preached, the person who does not believe still has sin as it is and goes to hell. But it means that the word the apostles preach is the word of God, that they have the authority God has given, and that because they are people who have truly received the remission of sins, they can also remit the sins of others.

This means that when those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit look at some soul and see signs that this person could receive the remission of sins if the word were preached to him, then they plow the field of his heart, tell him that he is a sinner, and then preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to him, and if that person believes, he receives the remission of sins. But if he does not believe even though a person who has received the remission of sins preaches to him, that person does not receive the remission of sins and goes to hell. So those who had the authority to remit sins were the apostles of the early Church, the disciples of Jesus, and after the disciples of Jesus had gone, those on this earth who heard and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit through the Bible—they, too, have the authority of the apostles. So although I do not say that I am an apostle, when I preach the word, if the hearer accepts the word, he receives the remission of sins. A priest, a pastor, or a doctor of theology who is a sinner, with sin in his heart, has no authority however well he knows this gospel and however theoretically he preaches the word. Why is that? It is because he does not have the Holy Spirit. It means that one receives the remission of sins in one's heart only by hearing and believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached by a person who has the Holy Spirit. In this age,

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we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and testify of it to people.

I have everything I preach typed up. Why is that? It is because the word I preach is not my own theory, but because I believe this word that is in the Bible, and because I have received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit is in me, I am preaching the gospel on behalf of God. So if people hear and believe the word preached by me, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they can receive the remission of sins and also receive the blessing of God. When what I have preached is typed up, made into booklets, and given to people, people receive the remission of sins through these booklets, and if they reject the contents of these booklets, they do not receive the remission of sins.

The Catholic Church says that the Pope has the authority to remit sins, the authority to make people go to heaven, and the keys of heaven, and that the priests have the authority to remit the sins of the believers, but this word is a word spoken to the disciples of Jesus, who had received the remission of sins. The disciples of Jesus are those who received the remission of sins by believing in what He did—He who came to this earth, received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and died and rose again, truly removed all our sins and poured the Holy Spirit into our hearts, our Savior and shepherd and God. It means that such disciples of Jesus received the authority to remit the sin of people. When I preach this, it is easy, but if you ask elsewhere, they speak of it in a complicated way. Because I have received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit through the word of the Lord, whoever accepts the word I preach receives the remission of sins. That is why I started the church, and started it in order to preach the gospel to the whole world together with you.

Peace came upon my heart through the word

As I looked at the word in which Jesus receives baptism from John, I came to know this truth: "With the baptism the Lord received from John in the Jordan River, He had my sins, all the sins of the world, transferred to His own body; so His having my sins transferred to Him and going into the water is His having shed His blood and died on the Cross and risen again and become my Savior; He has removed my sins; He has removed the sin of all the people of the whole world." At that moment, peace came upon my heart. No other sound could be heard, but I felt something like this in my heart: there is a great lake in my heart, and a small stone is thrown into that lake, and the ripples spread gently until they cover the whole lake. In Buddhist terms it is enlightenment, and in Christianity, too, it is enlightenment. When you, too, heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received it into your hearts, there was no emotion, but there is one clear thing. You can know: "I have no sin; when Jesus received baptism from John, He took my sins away; and He received the judgment on the Cross in my place; and He rose again." That is exactly the remission of sins and being born again.

People say that they cannot tell whether they have received the Holy Spirit or not, but when one receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit is given as a gift. Yet there is no sensation at all. If there is a sensation, it is rather something wrong. When one hears the word, one believes it in one's heart, saying, "That is right, that is right," and agrees and sympathizes with it. One who says, "That is so, that is so," is exactly a person who has received the remission of sins. A person who has not received the remission of sins does not understand what is being said and gets a headache, and wishes the sermon would end quickly. These days I preach keeping to the time, because there is no one

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here hearing the gospel for the first time. In the old days I went on for two or three hours at a stretch, and even now, if I try, I can preach a tremendous amount.

The disciples of Jesus preached this gospel—the fact that Jesus came to this earth, had their sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died and rose again, and thereby received the judgment in our place and became our Savior. Let us look at the word of Peter, the chief apostle among the disciples of Jesus. *"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)*. Here Peter speaks of the fact that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him, bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again and became our Savior. What is the water? What is the baptism that Jesus received?

It is *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism" (1 Peter 3:21)*. It is because only if Jesus had once had our sins moved and transferred to His own body could He die hung on the Cross and rise again and become our Savior. Saying this, he is speaking of this gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe. And he said, *"Not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God" (1 Peter 3:21)*. It means that if we have a good conscience, we become people who cannot help saying, cannot help believing, and can only believe, that Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, bore the sin of the world and went to the Cross, was nailed to it and died shedding His blood, rose again from death, and became our Savior and saved us. It is that if one is a person with a conscience, when Jesus came to this

earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross, died, and rose again, and so saved us from sin, how could one say that Jesus could not remove all our sins, that He could not take all our sins away? One cannot say so.

"Not the removal of the filth of the flesh"

And what is important is that it says, *"Not the removal of the filth of the flesh" (1 Peter 3:21)*. There is no change in the flesh just because one is a person who has received the remission of sins. Because one has received the remission of sins, one may rather become a dissolute person. That is why one must serve the gospel within the Church, and when one continually does the work of the gospel, one can commit fewer sins even physically. Though one has received the remission of sins in one's heart, if one does not serve the gospel, one becomes one who lives completely according to the flesh. So you may think, "I have received the remission of sins, so why do sins rise up in my heart and why do I want to act this way and that? So perhaps I am not saved," but that is unrelated to having received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus; it is that the flesh has the habit of having committed sins in the old days as the lusts of the flesh rose up, so that unless it lives according to that habit, the body becomes twisted. The habits of the flesh do not change easily. That is why, within the Church, one continually gives oneself to the work of serving the gospel, and while doing this work of God, one has no time to commit sin. As one keeps on doing so, as one lives hearing the word, now one comes to dislike committing sin and feels uncomfortable in heart, and one becomes a spiritual person and does the work as the Holy Spirit wants and as the Church directs, so that though the flesh is weary, the heart is

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joyful, and so one becomes a person led by the Holy Spirit. That is how we become the instruments of the Holy Spirit, the instruments of God.

The word *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1)* is a word the Apostle Paul spoke. Paul says that when he had newly received the remission of sins, the old habitual sins of the flesh kept inciting his heart. *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:24–25)*. And he said, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1)*. It means that there is no judgment, there is no sin, and we have been saved from sin. So the Apostle Paul said, *"I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27)*, and said that he denied himself every day. If I, too, had not met the Lord and served the gospel, I would truly have been in great trouble. From the moment I met the Lord through the word, I said, "Lord, I will preach the gospel to the whole world; You may say, 'How will you preach it when people all do not believe?' but of course I know. It will be like striking a rock with an egg. I know that, but because I know that the will of the Lord is to preach this gospel, I will preach it; it does not matter how many the number may be; I will do the literature ministry." I know what this word means, but you do not yet know well, so I supply it in due season. I supply it at the right time, thinking, "For now, this much will do."

Peter is an apostle. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Peter preached and the Apostle Paul preached is recorded in this Bible. With this, we have received the remission of sins by believing in our hearts that Jesus has removed our sins, and we

are preaching this gospel. It means that those who believe as we do and live entirely for God have become, spiritually, little apostles in this age. When one who believes the word of God preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, everyone who hears that word and believes it in his heart receives the remission of sins and obtains eternal life. But if one does not believe in one's heart, sin remains as it is. The remission of sins is not a change of the flesh. Just as, when one grows old, one still wants to eat the food one liked when young but the body cannot take it, the flesh remains as it is even after one has received the remission of sins. So unless one somehow gives one's heart and gives one's body to serving the gospel, the body will run toward committing sin. Even a saved person cannot stop it. That is why we keep on creating the work of the gospel, and do the work of serving the Lord again and again, spending all our energy there. Then later we become exhausted, everything becomes tiresome, and we want to sleep. Then, after sleeping one night, we devote ourselves again to the work of the gospel like that.

Spiritually little apostles

It means that we who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit are, spiritually, little apostles. People all over the world receive the remission of sins by hearing the gospel we preach. *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23)*. If they believe that He has removed all their sins in this way and that way, their sins disappear and they become righteous and become the people of God. This word means this. Because Mary Magdalene had been demon-possessed and then met Jesus and received the remission of sins, she went to a place like a public

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cemetery, which even men fear, in order to watch over the body of Jesus. After Jesus rose again, He appeared first of all to Mary Magdalene, and then He appeared to the disciples and said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, and *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*. We who have received the remission of sins have peace in our hearts and our hearts are at ease. And we preach the gospel. People receive the remission of sins to the extent that we preach the gospel.

People do not know well who we are. But before God we are, spiritually, little apostles. So when people oppose me, I admonish them as far as I can, saying, "Are you really going to refuse to believe what I say and oppose me? Do you know what will happen to you if you do not believe my words? You will become a person who cannot turn back and will go to hell, and not only go to hell, but you will also be cursed on this earth, so do not do that." Since he, too, is a soul that must be saved, as far as I can, I do not readily get angry.

We are the channel for preaching the gospel, and the channel that delivers salvation and blessing. It means that God accomplishes His will through those who believe. Jesus said: Now I am going to the Father; as the Father has sent Me to this earth, I also send you into this world; go into the world and preach the gospel; preach the work I have done in removing the sin of this world. We must live by faith. We are, spiritually, little apostles. Those who hear the gospel we preach will receive the remission of sins, and if we do not preach the gospel, they do not receive the remission of sins. So we are those who have the responsibility to preach the gospel, and those who have a sense of mission. I hope that you will become those who do the work well and please the Lord and enjoy eternal life. I hope that God will give you faith and blessing. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

As the Father has sent Me, I also send you

< John 20:19-23 >

"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'"

The peace the risen Lord gave

The very first word the Lord spoke when He came to the disciples after He had come to this earth and risen again was *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*. Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and who believe in Jesus as their own Savior, have peace in their hearts. It means that their hearts are at peace. Whatever happens, their hearts are at peace. It is because the Lord has given them peace.

When the disciples had shut the doors for fear of the Jews

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and were trembling, afraid that they too would be seized and killed, the Lord appeared. Standing in their midst, He said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*, and showed them His hands and His side. He showed them the marks of the nails in His hands, and also showed them the mark of the spear in His side. The scars, the mark of the spear, and the marks of the nails would have been visible. But the risen Lord was very different from that wretched appearance of the time. It is because He was in a state of having become completely well. After completing the work of salvation on this earth, the Lord showed Himself twice on the day He rose again. In the daytime He appeared to Mary Magdalene, and in the evening He appeared in the midst of the disciples, who were all gathered together. And He said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*. Why was that? It was because in a little while He would ascend to the kingdom of the Father.

What does it mean that He said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*? It means: do mission work; do the work of preaching the gospel. *"When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you'" (John 20:20–21)*. This is the word that establishes, sends, and sends out those who have become the disciples of Jesus Christ as evangelists. If our Lord appeared to us today, what would He say? He would say: Now I have done all the work the Father sent Me to do; I have done all the work of saving you from sin; now go and preach to the whole world the work I have done, and save all mankind from sin. It means that He says this to you and me.

Sending booklets is our going

He said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21),* and when our Lord sends us, where must we go? We must meet people and preach the gospel throughout our whole country, and we must go to the whole world. You and I are now sending booklets. I correct and polish what I have preached and make it into booklets, and through those booklets we are preaching the gospel. This is exactly our response to this word, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*. If you and I all went to people and preached the gospel, how much could we preach? We could not preach much. So if we preach through booklets, our sending booklets is exactly the same as our going ourselves. It means that sending booklets is exactly the same as our going and working. In fact, they can do the work even better than we can. Why is that? It is because they can preach only the truth of the word, quickly and accurately, without any clash of language or culture.

For example, when we look at the life of a certain remote tribe—in our country, when an ancestor dies, it is considered doing well to perform the ancestral rites properly, but there, when one's parents die, the custom is for the whole family and relatives to gather and eat the flesh of the parents. They do so because they say, "How precious is the flesh of our parents; how could we give it to microbes and beasts? We must eat all the flesh of our parents ourselves," and that is because the culture is different. Could we go there and go through that life together with them? So instead of spending time studying cultures, if we send booklets translated into the language of each country, it is explaining what is recorded in the word of God and preaching what has been spoken by faith, so all they need is to look at the booklet, and the hearer simply has to accept it. No other words

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are needed. It speaks straight to the point: the Bible said this, and this word means this, and therefore the Lord has saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So how good is that? He said, *"I also send you" (John 20:21)*, and our sending books now is our going, and our going there and working. So we can see how effective sending books is, and how faithfully we are carrying out the command of the Lord.

I am an evangelist. When I went about all day long preaching the gospel until my mouth was sore, I managed to preach to two people in a day. Three people is not possible. It is far too hard. There is nothing as hard as preaching the gospel. So while training you, I thought, "I must make booklets and do it that way," and in order to do the literature ministry, I told you to collect what I preached, piece by piece. Because I said I would surely preach to the world in writing through these booklets, we are doing it now. I am going, and you are going, and all of us are going. The work we serve within this church is exactly you and me going and working. You and I are not even many in number, but the books have already gone out by the tens of thousands, by the hundreds of thousands. If one of us went in person, how much work could he do? Could he do as much work as one book? Perhaps in a whole lifetime one could not do as much work as even one book.

You may perhaps think this strange. But people who do not know foreigners well may think that all one has to do is go, but it is not so. If one is to go as a missionary, one cannot act as a missionary in that country from the start. One has to go and learn their way of life. To learn their way of life, one has to spend at least about five years continually living with them, talking with them, and eating their food, rather than preaching the gospel. Only then does one know a little that "this is how they live; these are their habits." After that, one speaks of the gospel to those

who have become familiar. Even the gospel cannot all be preached at once. While explaining about Jesus, if this person already believes in Jesus, one has to know what his denomination is, and since he will believe the doctrine of that denomination, one has to know in detail in what ways what I preach conflicts with it and preach carefully, avoiding those points. If, while preaching, one says something contrary to the doctrine of that denomination and there is a clash, that is the end of it. He says, "This person's faith is different from mine," and from then on one has to enter into debate, and while debating, if their own assertion is strong, those people stop. To say everything each side has to say, one has to go for at least two or three years to speak to one person. Five years to learn their way of life and culture, then preaching the gospel after that, and to get into the gospel of baptism takes ten years, twenty years. That is for preaching the gospel to one person.

Have you been abroad? Have you lived together with them? Because people know so little about such things, they send missionaries unconditionally. Because people do not know well, they cannot get a sense of it. In the early days, when I sent a certain missionary couple, I did not say much. I told them to just go and learn the way of life and hand out books. They say that they met someone today and talked, but that is just talk. When the other person talks, foreigners just accept it readily and only listen, but if you tell them they are wrong, that fellowship is cut off.

I have met many foreigners and missionaries here in our country, too. Even when I stay quietly at home, missionaries come once in a while, and when I go to a school I meet many of them. But they do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Nevertheless, for the single reason that they are missionaries, when they come into our country, the ordinary churches treat

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them with the utmost hospitality and follow them around. When it comes down to it, their ability to interpret the word is not up to that. That is why I said that we must send books. When we send a book, it first asks, "Have you been born again of water and the Spirit?" and then it speaks about sin, and it goes on in order like this. To have that much of a conversation by meeting a person in person, one has to be extremely close. Only then can one speak of such things. When that person says he already believes in Jesus, how could one start by speaking about sin?

So it means that one book going and working does more effective work than you and I going to that country and working until death, burying our bones there for a whole lifetime. So in order to make it effective, we make books and send them, and we are sending them. We do so because we know now; if we did not know, we absolutely could not do so. There are only two possibilities. Either one knows nothing at all about the other side, or one does this because one really knows well—one of the two. We are the latter. We do this because we know well. When the literature goes, they receive the booklet and read it, and they do not accept it at once, but read it two or three times, and then, at some point, because there is something they have heard somewhere, they think, "Shall I read it once more?"—and a person who really has sin in his heart receives the remission of sins even after reading it only once. Some people, even when they were about to give up, by reading the book once, have the word of God driven into their hearts and it remains there. So they send us news. How amazing is that?

He said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*, and our Lord has sent us. We are now going through booklets. In the old days, the ones who did the literature ministry best in the whole world were a certain brethren assembly, and next there were sects that did it well, and although the contents

in them are not the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they preach and learn what they preach through literature. But now, in the whole world, it is entirely we who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit purely through literature. We are now preaching it to the whole world. He said, *"I also send you" (John 20:21)*, and we are going now. Even now we are sending books by the container, and we are going. When you look at the photographs, in some countries they pile up books on the street and hand out free booklets. If the foreigners did not accept this gospel into their hearts, that would not be an easy thing. Without the Holy Spirit in their hearts, they could not do it. If you, too, were told to go out and pile up booklets and hand them out, if you did not fully believe this in your hearts, you could not do it out of shame, and could not do it out of embarrassment. Because it looks shabby, you absolutely could not do it. You could do it for a moment, but if told to keep doing it all twelve months of the year, you would quit. But the reason one can keep doing this even while suffering shame is that, because the Holy Spirit is within, there is the faith that although many people refuse it, there will be some people who need it, and that when it is given to a person who needs it, this book will save that person with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now this gospel is being preached widely in the world. The Lord said that He sends us, and we are doing it through booklets.

Which is better—for us to go and work in person, to work through booklets, or to do the work of serving so that we can send booklets, and so send them? Of the three, would not the third be the best? Whether you go or I go, what would we do? However famous a person may be in our country, when he goes there he amounts to nothing. Long ago there was a missionary who went to a certain remote tribe and did mission work for ten years. I heard directly from that person that after going and

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living with them, it took him ten years to teach them the numbers one, two, three. Those people have no language, so what gospel could one preach? They do not know good, bad, or even murder. It is even harder to teach that one commits murder in the heart. He said that it took ten years to teach them the numbers, and that there was no one to whom he preached the gospel; he only lived together with those people. He said they catch monkeys and roll the meat in the dirt and eat the meat with the dirt on it. So when they test a missionary, in order to find out whether this person wants to live with them, they deliberately throw the meat in the dirt, and by watching whether he eats it with the dirt on it or not, they judge whether he is on their side or not. He said that it took ten years to eat that naturally.

Because they live with all their clothes off, if one is to live with them, one also has to take off one's clothes, and because that is not an easy thing, they say they are always testing whether that person is on their side or not. He said that they come in while one is sleeping and try to kill one with a knife, and if one does not resist and stays still, they think, "This person truly wants to come into our tribe and live," and let him live, and if he resists, they kill him. He said with his own mouth that he did it for ten years while undergoing such tests. For ten years he was busy just accepting their culture, so what gospel could he preach? So if one is going to do something first of all, one has to create a language. Can words get through to people who know nothing? Among the missionaries, someone has to start by teaching such a tribe a language, but then it might be possible only after a century has passed—it is impossible. It means that even with people who are not like that, preaching the gospel is that hard and has no effect.

The three words the Lord spoke to the disciples

The words the Lord spoke when He appeared to the disciples after He rose again are three. First, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*; second, *"I also send you" (John 20:21)*; third, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22)*, exactly these three. To put it all together, it is the word, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20)*. It is to teach the gospel, make people believe it, and make them keep it. This is what the Lord said when He appeared to the disciples after He rose again. It means: I also want to send you; He wants to do the work of mission through us, and He wants to give new life to the souls on this earth. For what reason did God send His own Son to this earth? It was to give new life to us, mankind. Giving new life and making us live forever was the purpose of the Father, and the purpose for which He gave His own Son. That is what we are doing now. As I look at the Bible, I am startled again and again. It is because, after I met the Lord, I intended to do the literature ministry.

I thought of two things. One was to raise up the gospel greatly in our country, have an enormously large denomination, and send out enormous numbers of missionaries to preach the gospel; the other was to preach the gospel through literature. After I met the Lord, I thought of the two and chose the second. Too large a number is also a problem. Even now, when our number is this small, how many problems and headaches there are! It would be nice if the number were large, but Jesus, too, worked with twelve men. On this earth He preached the gospel to the whole world with twelve men, and He worked with seventy disciples. So it means that with only that small number

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of people who are well trained, who truly believe properly, follow, and are united together, one can preach the gospel to the whole world. It means that if only the number of people who do not believe properly is too large, one is too busy just managing them to preach the gospel, and it rather becomes a hindrance. So I am so thankful, and I have a heart that is thankful and thankful again that we are carrying out the command of the Lord.

The authority to remit sins

The third word the Lord spoke when He appeared to the disciples on Sunday evening was to receive the Holy Spirit, and He said these words. *"And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (John 20:22–23)*. It means that Jesus gave His disciples the authority to remove the sin of people, to make them be saved from sin. When we think, "That person is pitiful; I must preach the gospel to him," and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to him, that person receives salvation. But if we do not preach the gospel to that person, that person goes to hell. You and I have such authority. We are great people. In the Catholic Church, they call the Pope Papa, that is, Father, and they call the priests Father, too. They regard the priest as having the authority to remit sins, so when one goes to confession, saying one has committed sins, they have one do things to lessen the sins, such as telling one to do good deeds. They say that if one does good deeds to the extent of the sins one has committed, those sins are remitted. But are those sins remitted because one does good deeds? Because they regard themselves as having the authority to send people to heaven and

to hell like that, the priest comes to stand over the church members. We evangelists who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not lord it over people like that. It means that you and I have the authority to preach the gospel to souls, deliver them from hell, and make them obtain new life. That is why, if you and I do not preach the gospel, people all go to hell, and if we preach the gospel, then if that person accepts it he obtains salvation, and if he does not accept it, he himself goes to hell.

Because we have such authority, if a person opposes and does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach, that person goes to hell because he himself does not believe. They say, "What authority do you have?" but did our Lord say so, or did He not? He said, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them" (John 20:23)*. It means that if we remove that person's sins, they disappear, and if we do not remove them, they remain as they are. It means that there is such authority. So if people persecute, hate, and hinder the disciples of Jesus, the people of God, that is doing it to God. If people oppose the righteous and keep them from serving the gospel and from living a life of faith, that is doing it to God, and they receive the price of that sin from God. So even as we live together with one another, we must be careful toward one another. If we are rude, or press too hard, or keep the other person from living a life of faith, we are in serious trouble. Concerning the angels, the Bible says, *"Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14)*. So it means that one must not do so to the righteous. Is it not great that we have such authority? People say that our booklets are repetitive, but I want to say to them, "Then you try writing a booklet of this gospel without being repetitive; you try making a person receive the remission of sins by reading a booklet once."

The Lord breathed on them and said, *"Receive the Holy*

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Spirit" (John 20:22). The Holy Spirit is received when we believe the fact that the Lord has removed all our sins. It is not that one believes in Jesus separately and receives the Holy Spirit separately. It is not received by going to the mountains and doing fasting prayer. When one receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon one's heart. Why did the Lord say to receive the Holy Spirit? In the age of the Old Testament, the only people who received the Holy Spirit were the servants of God. The Holy Spirit worked within them. But because there was sin in the hearts of all people, the Holy Spirit could not come upon them. He worked like that only in the servants whom God had especially established, but in the age of the New Testament, because our Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John and had all our sins transferred to Him, was judged for them all and died on the Cross, and rose again from death and completed the work of removing all our sins, when we believe and accept that our Lord is our Savior, and the salvation that the Lord has given, we receive the remission of sins at the same time, and at the same time as we receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, who is holy, has come to be able to come upon our hearts. This is the truth.

So in the book that deals with the way to receive the Holy Spirit, I speak of that part. I say clearly, "The Holy Spirit is not received separately; it is not received that way; they say that one receives the Holy Spirit by going to the mountains and praying and making unintelligible sounds and being told to repeat them, but that is not the work of the Holy Spirit but the work of evil spirits." So the moment people read that book, it becomes completely clear that they had been mistaken. Without any tedious explanation, it presents the evidence and points it out biblically. Because people also say this and that theologically, through the exposition of Romans I have said, in a very essential

way, that our Lord is the righteous One of God and came to fulfill righteousness, that this righteousness speaks of our salvation, and that the gospel of that salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And in order to answer those who regard Jesus as merely a human being, I wrote several volumes of the exposition of the Gospel of John. I have made it so that the moment people read the books, they can no longer refute them.

What kind of human being is Jesus? *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3).* Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords and the Master of everything, but in order to save human beings from sin, He upheld the will of the Father and became a human being for a while. Jesus has the authority to rule the world, but for a while He humbled Himself and, in the form of a servant, underwent suffering for thirty-three years of His life in order to save us. But from the time He completed the work of saving us from sin, there is no one, neither the devil nor the angels nor anyone else, who can disregard Jesus. It means that He has made it so that all can only confess with their mouths that though He is the Son of God, He is God, and the King of love, the King of kings, and the true shepherd. I have spoken of such parts all through.

Overseas, there are many people who receive the remission of sins after reading one book, and who read all dozens of our books. When I speak, I begin with the conclusion. I first say that the Lord removed our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit like this, and then I tell how He removed them. Is there anyone in the world who speaks like that? Only a person with assurance can speak that way. Is there anyone who believes only in the blood of the Cross who could say at the outset that our Lord came to this earth and was hung on the Cross and saved us from sin, and then discuss how He saved us on the Cross? Are

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there pastors who keep discussing that repeatedly? There are almost none. They have already said the whole answer, and from then on they have nothing to say. When one digs into it concretely, what they have said ends up floating in the air. It is because there is no concrete content.

When we testify of the gospel, we tell everything concretely—when, where, what, and how. Some people say that John the Baptist is not the High Priest. John the Baptist is the High Priest. *"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matthew 11:12–13)*. The prophets for fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures are up to the days of John the Baptist. John the Baptist, too, is a prophet and also the High Priest. He is the High Priest because he played the role of the High Priest. He is the High Priest because he transferred the sin of mankind to Jesus once and for all; what else would make him the High Priest? Even by genealogy, he is of the house of Zacharias, so he is legitimate. And after him there is no High Priest. From the time Jesus said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* there is none. He fulfilled all the law of the Old Testament, so what need is there for it? Are the prophets of the Old Testament needed even now? So when the people who do not know this ask whether it is written in so many words that John the Baptist is the High Priest, they are left speechless. Even if you say, "Look here, is this not saying that?" they ask whether it is literally written that John the Baptist is the High Priest. Then do we go around with a label written on our foreheads saying who we are?

Those who do not know seize on the words or faults of the other person and slander. If you say to them, "If you are so good at slandering, you try saving that person who has sin from sin with the gospel you know," they can do nothing. They cannot do

it themselves, and do not even try. What they do is to slander the person who preaches the gospel so that the person who wants to hear the gospel cannot hear it, and send him to hell. It is because they have been seized by the devil and are serving as his slaves. This word, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:23)*, is truly so. So when people oppose me like that, I think, "This person is refusing salvation of his own accord," and I do not deal with him any longer. I always have the heart that says, "If you want to go to heaven, you must listen well to these words." It is not that I am high, or that I am better than that person, but that He has given you and me such authority. So all people must get along well with the righteous. That is why we are not quick to make an enemy of anyone, even if they act wickedly and do bad things to us. It is because if we say that that person is our enemy, that person is finished as far as the ranks of salvation are concerned. So as far as we can, we wait a long time, and keep on waiting until God gives an opportunity.

That the Lord spoke this word on the third day after He died, that is, on the day He rose again, is amazing above all, and I am thankful for it. That we are doing this work now according to the command of the Lord is also something I am so thankful for. From the fact that you and I have the authority to remit the sin of people, we realize that we have been entrusted with a truly precious duty, and that if we do not carry out this work, people will in the end fail to receive the remission of sins, and we feel the gravity of the task entrusted to us. Even now the books keep on going. In the first half of this year, too, tens of thousands have already gone. He said, *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*, and if we count one book as one person, we have now sent tens of thousands of people, and last year we sent hundreds of thousands of people. What missionary could send

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like that? If people were sent like that, would they do as much work as those books? As I said a moment ago, people become soaked in the culture of their way of life, and later they become naturalized there and become the same as them. Human beings assimilate well to their environment and are too weak. So how fortunate it is that we are doing this literature ministry!

Let us not lose our purpose

When will our Lord come? He said that He would come suddenly, so He will come before the world is completely ruined, and the world will be ruined suddenly. In any case, the world is changing too fast. When we try to keep up with the changes of the world, there keep being more and more things to attend to in the work we do, too. I am telling you this because I am afraid we might lose our purpose. Our purpose is this word: *"As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21)*. This is what we have to do. What we have to do is to preach the gospel to the people on this earth who do not know the gospel. Only then do we live a life that fits the purpose for which Jesus Christ has sent us. We are doing it now. So I felt that I had to bring this to the fore once again. We are being overwhelmed by work amid too many tasks.

But frankly, what does it matter if this and that are all accomplished? Whether it is a workplace or whatever, that is just what it is; what special meaning is there in it? If there is anything to attach meaning to, there is exactly one thing. That we can do the works of serving the gospel there—that is the one meaning it has, and what good is it to have a lot? Even if all the land of this country were given to me, what meaning would it have? There is only the one meaning, that it is of help in preaching the gospel. What good is it if I am rich? It is enough if we eat three

good meals a day and live without going to borrow money from others and can be generous to others; where is it written that one must become rich? When one becomes rich, one's hair turns white from managing one's property. One is anxious about whether someone will take it away or something will go wrong. There is nothing except the one meaning. Then what is the work I have to do, the work you have to do? Just as He said, *"I also send you" (John 20:21)*, the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world now, the work of sending books, the work of serving so as to send books—this is the most meaningful work and the greatest purpose in the lives of you and me. What other great purpose is there besides this?

Do more souls receive salvation because we are rich? If God gives us a lot of money, will the gospel be preached more? If we have too much money, we will not preach the gospel. Human beings are strange; when they have too much money, they attend to irrelevant things and do not do the work of preaching the gospel. Their direction goes elsewhere. We have to struggle. This is needed in order to preach the gospel. It means that only when we struggle do we not lose that purpose. That is why the Lord is giving us just the right amount. It is because having too little is not good either. So I thought that, beginning with myself, I must not forget the purpose, and that our workers and the saints must not forget it either, and that we must truly keep this word in mind.

We are serving and working in order to preach the gospel. Jesus said to you and me, *"I also send you" (John 20:21)*, that He sends us into the world, and your working and sending books is our going now. Since going in person has little effect, we preach the gospel through books. So how thankful we are! If I went in person, I could do nothing, and if you went, you could do nothing either. When I say such things, you may think that I

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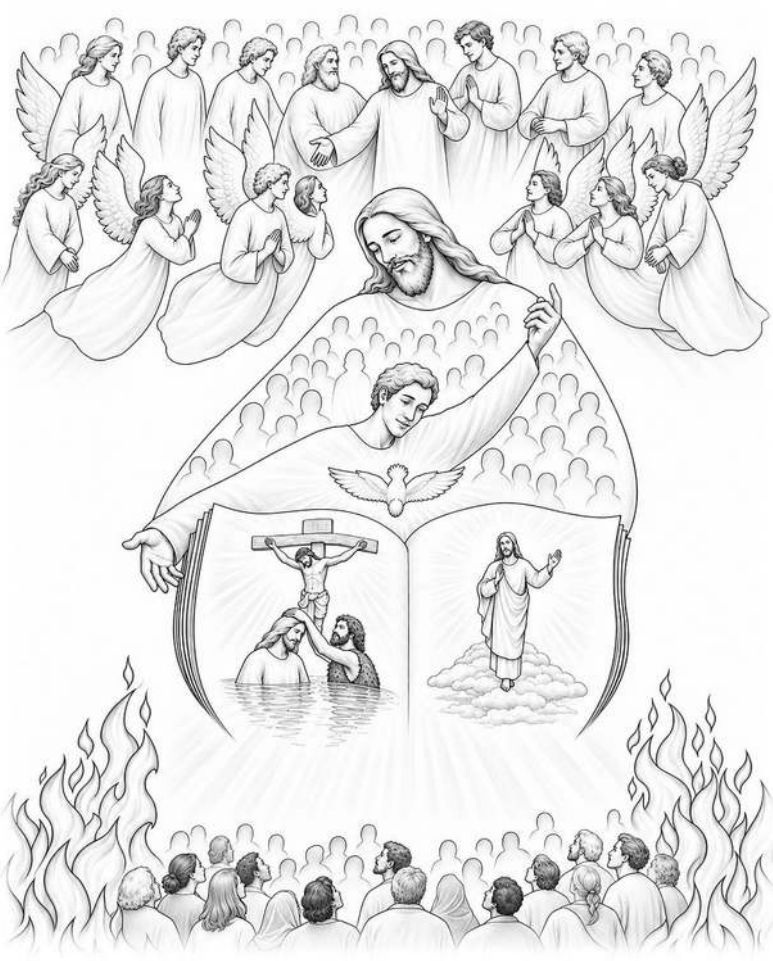
am belittling you, but it is really so. So let us work without losing our purpose. Since the Lord has sent us, I am so thankful that we carry out this work without losing our purpose. ✉

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CHAPTER

21

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John Chapter 21 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

John 21:1–14—why did the risen Jesus come again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias?

John 21:1–14 is the event in which the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples for the third time, at the Sea of Tiberias. Jesus made the disciples, who had toiled all night but obtained nothing, obtain abundant fruit by His word, and He prepared breakfast for them, weary as they were, and fed them. This word shows that Jesus, who saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is the One who, even after His resurrection, is with the saints in their lives and in the work of the gospel and takes care of them.

1. The disciples went fishing again

Seven disciples, including Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, and the sons of Zebedee, were together at the Sea of Tiberias. When Peter said, *"I am going fishing,"* the other disciples also got into the boat with him.

The disciples knew that Jesus had risen again, but Jesus was not always with them in the flesh as before. Not having taken firm hold of what they should do from then on, they went back to the work of fishing, which was familiar to them.

This shows that even those who have received the remission

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of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can rely on their own experience and the methods of the flesh if they forget the presence and guidance of the Lord. But Jesus did not abandon the discouraged disciples, and came even to the place where they were working.

2. The disciples toiled all night but caught nothing

The disciples were people who, as fishermen, had much experience in the work of catching fish. But that night they caught nothing. Even with their ability, their experience, and the toil they put in all night long, they could not obtain any fruit.

When the morning was breaking, Jesus was standing on the shore, watching the disciples. The disciples did not yet know that He was Jesus, but the Lord knew all their toil, their failure, and their need.

Jesus asked, *"Children, have you any food?"* and the disciples answered, *"No."* The disciples acknowledged the fact that they had obtained nothing by their own efforts. The help of the Lord appears when we acknowledge that we cannot do it by our own ability and methods, and accept His word.

3. When they obeyed the word of the Lord, they obtained abundant fruit

Jesus said to the disciples:

"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some" (John 21:6).

The disciples did not yet clearly know that the One speaking was Jesus, but they cast the net according to that word. Then so

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many fish were caught that they were not able to draw in the net.

The boat, the net, and the skill the disciples used were the same as when they had been fishing all night long. What was different was the fact that they heard the word of the Lord and obeyed it. It was not the ability of the disciples that produced the fruit, but the word of the Lord that made them obtain the fruit.

In Luke chapter 5, too, Peter toiled all night and obtained nothing. But when he obeyed, saying, *"At Your word I will let down the net,"* he caught many fish. Then Jesus said to Peter, *"From now on you will catch men."*

The event of John chapter 21 reminds the disciples of the mission they had first received. When they preach the gospel not by their own ability but by believing and obeying the word of the risen Lord, the Lord works so that they can preach the gospel to many souls.

4. John recognized the Lord when he saw the work of the word

When many fish were caught, the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, *"It is the Lord!"* Because he remembered the signs Jesus had performed and the words He had spoken before, he recognized the fact that the One who had done this was the risen Jesus.

It was not only because they saw the fact that there were many fish that they recognized the Lord. It was through the event in which they, who had caught nothing all night, obtained abundant fruit when they obeyed the word of Jesus, that they realized that the One who had spoken was the Lord.

Today, too, we recognize the Lord not by seeing Jesus with the eyes of the flesh, but through the written word. When we

hear and believe the word of the Bible and obey that word, we come to realize that the risen Lord is guiding our lives and the work of the gospel.

5. Peter plunged into the sea to go to the Lord

When Peter heard the words *"It is the Lord!"* he put on his outer garment and plunged into the sea. He was a person who had denied Jesus three times, but he did not avoid the Lord, and went to Him first of all.

Peter was able to go to the Lord not because he was a perfect person who had not committed sin. It was because Jesus knew all the weakness and faults of Peter, and was the Savior who had already borne even all those sins.

Jesus had all the sin of mankind, including that of Peter, transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. And by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place, and He rose again from death and became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also do not avoid the Lord because of their own shortcomings. Because they believe that Jesus has removed all the sins we will commit throughout our lifetime, they acknowledge their shortcomings and yet go to Him, relying on the grace of the Lord.

6. Jesus prepared breakfast for the disciples

When the disciples came up onto the land, fish were laid on a fire of coals and bread was also prepared. Jesus said to the

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disciples, who were weary from toiling all night, *"Come and eat breakfast,"* and He Himself gave them the bread and the fish.

It was not that the disciples first prepared food for the Lord. The risen Lord came to the disciples first and prepared what they needed. The Lord is not One who only entrusts the disciples with a mission, but One who takes care of their bodies, their hearts, and their lives.

Even after Jesus has saved us from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He does not leave us alone. He is with us when we serve the gospel, comforts us with His word when we are discouraged, awakens us when we go the wrong way, and supplies what we need.

7. The risen Jesus is the living God, in reality

That Jesus gave the bread and the fish to the disciples shows that His resurrection was not a mere vision or a spiritual notion. Jesus, who was hung on the Cross and died, actually rose again, and He stood beside the disciples, spoke to them, and shared food with them.

The text makes clear that this was the third time Jesus showed Himself to the disciples after He was raised from the dead. Jesus is not One who remained in death, but the Lord of life, who overcame sin and death and rose again.

By the resurrection of Jesus, the fact that the salvation He accomplished is complete was also proved. Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin completely on the Cross, and by rising again from death, gave new life and eternal life to those who believe.

8. The risen Lord is with us by the Holy Spirit

Jesus ascended after He rose again, but He did not leave those who are saved. The Lord dwells in the hearts of those who believe by the Holy Spirit, and He promised to be with us even to the end of the age.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus only as an event that happened in the past. They believe the fact that the risen Jesus is alive even now, taking care of their lives and the Church of God and guiding the work of the gospel.

At first the disciples did not know that the One standing on the shore was Jesus. But even when they did not know, Jesus was already there and was watching them. We, too, may not immediately realize the help of the Lord in the midst of difficulties, but the Lord is with us by the Holy Spirit and guides us through the word.

9. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit live relying on the word

Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not live believing only in their own ability. Like the disciples who toiled all night but obtained nothing, they know that there is a clear limit to human ability.

Therefore in everything we must first hear and believe the word of the Lord. In particular, the work of preaching the gospel and serving souls cannot be done by human zeal or wisdom alone. We must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, be united with the Church of God, and obey the word the Lord has given.

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The risen Lord works together with those who preach the gospel. Just as He told the disciples where to cast the net, He opens the way to preach the gospel, and just as He made them obtain many fish, He makes us meet the souls who will hear the gospel and receive the remission of sins. Also, just as He prepared breakfast, He supplies the spiritual and physical things needed to serve the gospel.

Conclusion

John 21:1–14 is the word in which the risen Jesus came to the disciples, who were fishing in discouragement, made them obey His word and obtain abundant fruit, and Himself fed them in their weariness.

Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, and by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place. And He rose again from death and gave the remission of sins and new life to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The risen Lord is with us even now by the Holy Spirit. Even when we fail to recognize the Lord, He watches over us, guides us with the word, and supplies what is needed in our lives and in the work of the gospel. Therefore those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not rely only on their own ability, but believe and obey the word of the Lord, and live a life of preaching the gospel together with the risen Lord.

John 21:15–23—what does it mean that Peter answered, *"You know that I love You"*?

John 21:15–23 is the word in which the risen Jesus asked Peter three times about his love, entrusted him with the sheep of God, and commanded him to follow Him under any circumstances. Peter had denied Jesus three times, but Jesus, as the Savior who had already borne and removed all the sins of his lifetime, restored him. This word shows that those who have received the remission of sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit must believe in the love of the Lord and live serving the Church of God and souls.

1. Jesus asked Peter three times about his love

After they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Peter, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"* Jesus repeated the same question three times, and Peter, too, confessed three times that he loved the Lord.

When Jesus was arrested, Peter denied the Lord three times. The man who had been confident that he would never deny Him, even if he had to die with the Lord, said even before a servant girl that he did not know Jesus. But Jesus, who rose again from death, did not abandon Peter and came to him again.

Jesus asked three times about his love not in order to condemn Peter and drive him away, but in order to raise him up again after his failure and establish him as a disciple of the Lord and a worker of the gospel.

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2. Jesus, who bore even the sins of Peter

Peter did not know that he would deny Jesus, but Jesus already knew. Jesus said, *"Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat,"* but prayed that the faith of Peter should not fail, and said, *"When you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren" (Luke 22:31–32)*.

Jesus received baptism from John while knowing even the sins that Peter would commit in the future. Through that baptism He had all the sin of mankind, including that of Peter, transferred to His own body, and by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place. And He rose again from death and became the eternal Savior of Peter.

Therefore Peter did not become a sinner again because of his denial and failure. It is because Jesus had borne and removed all the sins of his lifetime. What raised Peter up again was not his new resolve, but the complete salvation that Jesus accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

3. *"You know that I love You"*

When Jesus asked about his love, Peter did not put forward his loyalty and his will again. He confessed as follows.

"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17).

Peter knew his own weakness, and he also believed the fact that the Lord knows all things. He no longer boasted of himself, saying, "I will never abandon the Lord." He entrusted himself to Jesus, who knew both his failure and the love toward the Lord that was in his heart.

Peter was able to love the Lord because the Lord loved him first. Just as the word says, *"We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19)*, true love comes from believing in the love of the Lord, who has remitted all our sins.

Furthermore, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not love and serve the Lord in order to obtain salvation. They love the Lord because they believe and are thankful that Jesus has already removed all the sin of mankind.

4. *"Do you love Me more than these?"*

Jesus asked Peter, *"Do you love Me more than these?"* Peter had the disciples who were with him, the fish, the boat, and his familiar livelihood. But Jesus asked what was most precious in the heart of Peter.

In the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a heart that loves the Lord, who saved them from all their sins. The riches and honor of the world, family and people are precious, too, but none of them can give us the remission of sins and eternal life.

Only Jesus saved us from all our sins with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Therefore those who are saved regard the Lord as most precious, and put the will of the Lord before their own fleshly desires and the gain of the world.

5. He entrusted the sheep to the one who loves the Lord

Each time Peter confessed his love, Jesus said:
— *"Feed My lambs"*

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— *"Tend My sheep"*
— *"Feed My sheep"*

The sheep are not the possession of Peter, but the sheep of Jesus. Jesus saved the sheep with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and as the good shepherd He gave His life for the sheep. Now the Lord entrusted those sheep to Peter.

To *"Feed My sheep"* is to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that those who are not yet saved receive the remission of sins, and to feed the saints who have already received the remission of sins with the word of God so that they grow in faith. To *"Tend My sheep"* means to guide and take care of the saints rightly with the word so that they do not follow the desires of the flesh and wrong teachings.

Later, Peter exhorted the elders of the church to shepherd the flock of God, not by lording it over them, but by being examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:2–3). He preached the gospel and nurtured the saints according to the word he had received from the Lord.

6. Those who know the love of the Lord serve souls

Rather than about the knowledge or ability of Peter, Jesus first asked whether he loved the Lord. It is because, in order to take care of the sheep of the Lord rightly, one must know the love one has received from the Lord.

Those who believe that all their sins have been completely removed by the baptism of Jesus and the Cross can be longsuffering toward the faults of others and preach the gospel. Because they know that they, too, were saved by grace, they do not proudly dominate people, but can serve souls from the position of a servant.

When the faith of those who have received the remission of sins grows, they go forward from a life lived only for themselves to a life for other souls. They look at what the Church of God needs, think of those who have not yet heard the gospel, and take part in the spread of the gospel according to the gifts and circumstances each has received.

7. Peter would come to glorify God by his death

Jesus said that when Peter was young he girded himself and walked where he wished, but when he was old, another would gird him and carry him where he did not wish. John explains that this word signifies by what death Peter would glorify God.

Peter had previously put his own thoughts and strength first, but from then on he would come to offer even his life and death for the will of the Lord and the gospel. Jesus said to him, *"Follow Me."*

To follow the Lord is not merely to confess with the lips that one believes in Jesus. It is for those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit to use their time, their possessions, and their bodies for the gospel and for souls, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The more their faith grows, the more they live thinking of the kingdom of God and the salvation of other souls rather than of their own gain.

8. The gaze of Peter turned toward another disciple

Peter, who had heard the word *"Follow Me"* from Jesus, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following behind. Peter asked

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Jesus, *"But Lord, what about this man?"*

After hearing the word about his own way, Peter asked what way that disciple would go. Then Jesus told him not to make the future of that disciple the standard of the faith and mission of Peter.

"If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me" (John 21:22).

The work Jesus entrusted to Peter and the work He entrusted to John were different from each other. For Peter there was the way of taking care of the sheep of God, preaching the gospel, and glorifying God by his death. For John there was the mission of testifying of and recording the words and the work of salvation of Jesus that he had seen and heard.

Salvation is the same, but offices and gifts can be different. Just as it is said, *"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord" (1 Corinthians 12:4–5)*, even for those who have believed in the same gospel of the water and the Spirit, the work the Lord entrusts to them varies.

9. We must look not at the way of others, but at the Lord

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not become proud or discouraged by comparing themselves with others. If they keep looking at who is doing greater work, who is receiving more recognition, and why the circumstances of others look better than their own, they can miss the word and the mission given to them.

The word Jesus spoke to Peter is clear.

"You follow Me" (John 21:22).

The standard of the life of faith is not other people. The standard is how Jesus saved me with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, and what kind of life He has entrusted to me, who have received that salvation.

We should respect the mission of other saints and be united with one another, but we must not entrust our own faith and obedience to others. Each person must believe the word given to him, and faithfully serve the gospel and the Church of God in the place the Holy Spirit has entrusted to him.

10. We must believe the word of Jesus accurately

When Jesus said, *"If I will that he remain till I come,"* the saying spread among the brethren that that disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die.

John clearly distinguished the actual word of Jesus from the saying that had spread among people. This shows that faith must be based not on the rumors or speculation of people, but on the written word.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, must be believed just as the word of the Bible says. We must believe the fact that Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, the fact that He received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and the fact that He rose again from death, as one complete salvation. We must accept accurately what the Bible actually says, not the doctrines of men or words wrongly handed down.

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Conclusion

John 21:15–23 is not the word in which Jesus condemned and abandoned Peter, who had failed, but the word in which Jesus, who had removed all his sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, restored him and established him as a worker of the gospel.

Because Peter had first received perfect love and the remission of sins from the Lord, he was able to confess, *"You know that I love You."* Jesus entrusted to him the way of feeding and taking care of the sheep of God, and of glorifying God by his life and his death.

Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also believe in the love of the Lord, who saved them, and serve the sheep of God. They must not compare themselves with the mission of others, must believe the written word accurately, and must obey the word of the Lord, *"You follow Me."* This is the life of a disciple who has received the remission of sins and lives following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

John 21:24–25—why did the Apostle John record the work of Jesus and make clear that his testimony is true?

John 21:24–25 is the conclusion of the whole Gospel of John. The Apostle John testified of and recorded the words and the work of Jesus that he himself saw and heard, and he makes clear that his testimony is true. Not everything that Jesus did was recorded, but through the written word we can believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and obtain the remission of sins

and eternal life with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. The Apostle John is a witness who saw the work of Jesus for himself

In verse 24, *"The disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things"* is the Apostle John, who was earlier called *"the disciple whom Jesus loved."* He did not record a story he had heard from others, but testified of what he saw and heard while following Jesus himself.

The Apostle John, as a disciple of John the Baptist, knew firsthand the testimony that Jesus had received baptism from John and that the Holy Spirit had descended and remained upon Him. He also saw Jesus heal the sick and raise the dead Lazarus, and he witnessed the scene where Jesus died hung on the Cross and the event of His appearing to the disciples after He rose again.

Therefore the Gospel of John is not human philosophy or religious imagination, but the testimony of an apostle concerning the work of salvation that Jesus Christ actually accomplished.

2. *"We know that his testimony is true"*

The Gospel of John makes clear the fact that the testimony of John is true. Even while recording the death of Jesus on the Cross, John said as follows.

"And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe" (John 19:35).

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Because the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection are things that actually took place, the salvation we believe in is also certain. Jesus actually received baptism from John, actually died on the Cross, shedding His blood, and actually rose again from death.

Today we did not see the events of that time with the eyes of the flesh, but we believe the word that the Holy Spirit had the apostles record. The word *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"* applies precisely to those who believe this written testimony.

3. The testimony of John makes clear who Jesus is

The Gospel of John does not testify of Jesus only as a great teacher or a man who performed miracles. Jesus is the Word, who was with God from the beginning, and God, who created all things. That God put on flesh and came to this earth in order to save sinners.

John testified of Jesus as *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John. And by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place.

By rising again from death, Jesus overcame the power of sin and death, and revealed that He is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Apostle John saw, heard, and recorded.

4. The Gospel of John was written so that we may believe and have life

John 21:24–25 is connected with the purpose of the Gospel of John recorded in the previous chapter.

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

The purpose for which God had the Gospel of John written does not lie only in conveying knowledge about the life of Jesus. It is so that we may read this word, believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and obtain the remission of sins and eternal life that He accomplished.

Therefore those who read the Bible must not stop at the fact that Jesus performed miracles. They must realize and believe by what method Jesus bore and removed our sins. When they accept in their hearts the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection as one complete salvation, they obtain the remission of sins and eternal life.

5. The things Jesus did are far more than what is recorded

John says that there are many other things that Jesus did besides these. He said that if all the words of Jesus, all His signs, and all the things He did together with the disciples were written one by one, even the world could not contain the books that would be written.

This word shows that the power and the work of Jesus are so great and abundant that they cannot all be contained in human records. Jesus is not a religious leader who performed a few

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miracles, but God, who created and rules all things.

The signs recorded in the Gospel of John are a part of the things Jesus did, but they all point toward one purpose. The signs of turning water into wine, feeding the crowd with the five loaves and two fish, opening the eyes of the blind man, and raising the dead Lazarus testify that Jesus is the Son of God, who gives life.

6. Even though not everything was recorded, the truth of salvation is clear

Not everything that Jesus did is recorded in the Bible, but the truth needed for a sinner to be saved is recorded sufficiently and clearly.

— Human beings are sinners who have become distant from God because of sin.

— Jesus is the Son of God, who came in the flesh to save sinners.

— Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John.

— Jesus received the judgment of sin on the Cross in our place.

— Jesus rose again from death and became the Savior of those who believe.

— Those who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts receive the remission of sins and obtain the Holy Spirit and eternal life.

Therefore people do not need to go about looking for secrets or new revelations that are not recorded in the Bible. The assurance of salvation is not to be obtained from dreams or visions, from feelings or religious experiences, but must be

obtained from the written word of God.

7. Those who have believed the true testimony preach that gospel in turn

The Apostle John recorded the salvation that Jesus accomplished, which he had seen and heard, and handed it down to the people of later generations. Through the testimony that John left, countless people to this day have come to know and believe in Jesus and obtain life.

Those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also preach this true testimony to other souls. It is not to make up and tell a story they did not witness themselves, but to preach the work of salvation of Jesus recorded in the Bible just as it is.

We must preach the fact that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and then rose again from death. Those who hear this gospel and believe it in their hearts receive the remission of sins and become the children of God.

In this way, the testimony of the Apostle John does not remain a story of the past recorded in a book. Even now, through the written word, the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus Christ to sinners and gives the remission of sins and eternal life to those who believe.

Conclusion

John 21:24–25 is the word that makes clear the fact that the Apostle John saw and recorded the words and the work of Jesus

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for himself, and that his testimony is true. It was not possible to record everything Jesus did, but in the Gospel of John, the truth of salvation that we need in order to believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and obtain life is clearly recorded.

Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and by bearing that sin and dying on the Cross, shedding His blood, He received the judgment of sin in our place. And He rose again from death and became the eternal Savior of those who believe.

Therefore those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit make the true word recorded by the apostles the basis of salvation, not the doctrines of men or special experiences. They must also preach the gospel of life they have received to others, and serve so that they, too, may believe in Jesus Christ and obtain the remission of sins and eternal life. ✉

Questions and Answers on John Chapter 21

[Question] 1. Who is the person who wrote John chapter 21?

The writer of John chapter 21 is the Apostle John, a disciple of Jesus.

Verse 20 of chapter 21 calls the person who was following Peter *"the disciple whom Jesus loved,"* and makes clear that he was the disciple who leaned on the breast of Jesus at the Last Supper and asked who would betray the Lord. Then verse 24 records, *"This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true."* That is, the person who testified of and recorded this event is 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'

That disciple is the Apostle John. John did not put his own name forward, but presented himself as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' He was a disciple who followed Jesus closely and witnessed His words and the things He did, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection. Therefore John chapter 21 is the word that the Apostle John recorded by testifying of the facts he himself saw and heard.

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[Question] 2. John 21:1–14—which appearance was it when the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias?

The appearance to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias is the third event in which Jesus Christ appeared to the disciples after He rose again from the dead.

When we look at the order recorded in the Gospel of John, the first was on the evening of the day He rose again, when the disciples were gathered with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. Jesus stood in their midst, said, *"Peace be with you,"* and showed them His hands and His side. At this time Thomas was not in that place.

The second was after eight days had passed from then. This time Thomas, too, was with the disciples. Jesus appeared again inside the shut room, had Thomas confirm the print of the nails in His hands and His side, and told him not to be unbelieving, but believing.

The third is the event at the Sea of Tiberias in the text. When the seven disciples who had gone fishing had caught nothing all night long, Jesus appeared on the shore. When they cast the net on the right side of the boat according to the word of the Lord, one hundred and fifty-three large fish were caught, and Jesus prepared bread and fish for the disciples. Concerning this, verse 14 makes clear, *"This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead."*

Here, *"the third time"* does not count all the appearances to everyone after the resurrection, but refers to the times He showed Himself where the disciples were together. Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene before that, too, but the text is counting the number of times He appeared to the group of the disciples.

[Question] 3. John 21:3—why did Peter and the other disciples get into the boat and go fishing again?

Simon Peter and the other disciples set out to fish because, even after meeting the risen Jesus, they had fallen into discouragement and emptiness without having made up their minds how to live from then on.

The disciples had already met the risen Jesus twice. But Jesus did not stay beside them at all times as He had before He was crucified; He appeared for a moment and then disappeared. The disciples knew the fact that Jesus had risen, but they did not know how to receive His guidance. They now had the confusion and sense of futility of not knowing whom to follow and what to do.

Peter, in particular, was in a state of having deeply experienced his own weakness after denying Jesus three times. He thought that the hope of the past days of following the Lord was over, and tried to go back to his old livelihood, which he could do most familiarly. So he said, *"I am going fishing."* The practical need of catching and selling fish to make a living was also included in that decision.

The other disciples said, *"We are going with you also,"* because Peter was in a leading position among them. When Peter went back to his old occupation, the other disciples, who had been discouraged, followed his decision and got into the boat with him.

But the fact that even though they toiled all night long they caught nothing shows that their way of trying to live by their own experience and strength alone could only be vain. Jesus did not abandon such disciples, but came to the shore. And by telling them to cast the net on the right side of the boat, He showed the fact that the risen Lord was still with them and was guiding and

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taking care of their lives. What the disciples needed was not to go back to their old life, but to believe and follow the guidance of the living Lord.

[Question] 4. John 21:4–6—how did the disciples let down the net according to the instruction of Jesus, and what was the result?

The disciples were people with much experience as fishermen, but even after casting the net all night long they did not catch a single fish. When the morning was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not recognize that He was Jesus. When Jesus asked, *"Children, have you any food?"* they did not hide their failure but answered, *"No."*

Jesus said to them, *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some."* The disciples did not put forward their experience of having toiled all night long, nor did they argue what use it would be to cast the net again now that day was breaking. Although they did not know that the One speaking was Jesus, they cast the net on the right side of the boat according to that word.

The result was entirely different from when the disciples had toiled by their own strength all night long. It is said, *"So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish."* What was caught was one hundred and fifty-three large fish, and even though so many fish were in it, the net was not broken. Seeing this amazing result, the disciple whom Jesus loved realized that the One standing on the shore was the Lord, and said to Peter, *"It is the Lord!"*

What is important in the action of the disciples is the point that they followed the word of Jesus just as it was. They had toiled all night long with their own knowledge and experience,

but obtained nothing. But when they heard the word of the Lord and did just as it said, they obtained an abundant result that they could not have obtained by their own strength. The One who knew where the fish were was Jesus, and the One who made the disciples obtain them was also Jesus.

Therefore this event shows the fact that one cannot obtain true fruit by relying only on human experience and ability, and that when we believe and obey the word of the Lord, the Lord supplies what is needed and accomplishes the work. What the disciples needed was not a more excellent fishing technique, but the faith that hears the word of the living Lord and follows His guidance.

[Question] 5. John 21:11—what is the meaning of the number of large fish caught in the net being recorded as one hundred and fifty-three?

The number one hundred and fifty-three is the exact number of large fish that the disciples who obeyed the word of Jesus actually drew up. That the Apostle John did not simply record that 'they caught many fish,' but stated the number concretely, shows that this is the vivid testimony of a person who witnessed this event for himself.

The disciples cast the net all night long but did not catch a single fish. But when they cast the net on the right side of the boat as Jesus said, one hundred and fifty-three large fish were caught at once. Considering the net and the fishing methods the disciples used at that time, for so many large fish to be caught at one time was an amazing miracle. The number one hundred and fifty-three concretely shows the scale of the abundant result accomplished by the word of Jesus, not a result obtained by the

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skill and experience of the disciples.

Moreover, even though so many fish were in it, the net was not broken. Jesus not only made the disciples obtain much, but also kept them so that they could gather in completely what He had given. When they toiled by their own strength all night long, they obtained nothing, but when they believed and obeyed the word of the Lord, they obtained so abundantly that it was hard for them to handle it.

Therefore the central meaning in the number one hundred and fifty-three does not lie in some mystical calculation of numbers, but in the word and the power of the living Jesus. The exact number of fish testifies that the word of the Lord was actually fulfilled, and shows that the fruit the disciples needed is given not by their own experience and ability, but when they believe and follow the word of the Lord. Seeing this event, the disciple whom Jesus loved recognized that the One standing on the shore was the Lord Himself.

[Question] 6. John 21:11—as what symbol of faith was the fish used among the early Christians?

The fish of John 21:11 are, first of all, the fish actually caught by the disciples who obeyed the word of the risen Jesus.

"Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken" (John 21:11).

When we relate these fish to the early Christians, the fish was a mark of faith by which they recognized one another as people who believe in Jesus. At that time it was hard to reveal one's faith openly because of persecution, so when one met a stranger, one person drew half of a fish on the ground. If the other person

was also one who believed in Jesus, he drew the other half and completed the shape of the fish. In this way they confirmed that they were people of the same faith and treated one another as brothers and sisters.

The core contained in the sign of the fish did not stop at merely showing the identity of being a Christian. It was a confession that one believes the fact that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross carrying that sin, and rose again from death and became the perfect Savior. In particular, the fish can be understood as a sign showing the work of salvation in which Jesus bore sin with the baptism He received from John.

Therefore, to the early Christians, the fish showed the faith and the identity of the saints who had received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It was also a secret sign and a sign of faith by which the saints who believed in the same gospel recognized one another even under persecution and had fellowship as the family of God.

[Question] 7. John 21:15–17—arrange in a table how the three questions Jesus asked Peter differed.

Time	Question of Jesus	Answer of Peter	Command of Jesus	Notable difference
First	*"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"*	*"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."*	*"Feed My lambs."*	He asked whether he loved Jesus more, in comparison with others.

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Time	Question of Jesus	Answer of Peter	Command of Jesus	Notable difference
Second	*"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"*	*"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."*	*"Tend My sheep."*	Without any expression of comparison, He asked directly whether Peter himself loved Jesus.
Third	*"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?"*	*"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You."*	*"Feed My sheep."*	The question was the same as the second, but because of the third repetition, Peter was grieved. Rather than his own assertion, Peter appealed to the judgment of Jesus, who knows all things.

In the first question there is the comparison *"more than these."* Peter had previously declared confidently that even if all the other disciples abandoned Jesus, he would not abandon Him, but in reality he denied Jesus three times. Now he did not put forward his will and his loyalty, but answered, *"You know that I love You."* He did not claim that he was better than others, but entrusted his love to Jesus, who knows his heart.

In the second question, the words *"more than these"* were left out, and He asked, *"Do you love Me?"* Rather than comparing Peter with others, Jesus confirmed the relationship between Peter himself and Jesus. The answer of Peter was the same as the first. He did not try to prove his love on the basis of his own resolution or deeds, but confessed that Jesus knew his love.

The sentence of the third question is the same as the second, but when he received the same question the third time, Peter was grieved. It was because the matter of his having denied Jesus three times could not help coming to mind. Nevertheless, Peter did not despair and draw back, but confessed, *"Lord, You know all things."* Jesus knew not only his denial and weakness, but even the fact that he truly loved the Lord.

The three commands also differ a little. The first time He said, *"Feed My lambs,"* the second time, *"Tend My sheep,"* and the third time, *"Feed My sheep."* To feed the sheep is to nurture them with the word of God and make them grow, and to tend the sheep is to guide them in the right way, take care of them, and rule over them so that they do not go the wrong way. This is not a command to oppress people, but the mission to treat the sheep of Jesus as whole persons and to feed, take care of, and lead them.

The center of the three questions does not lie in trying to test three different kinds of love. In place of Peter's three denials, Jesus established three confessions of love, and entrusted His sheep to him three times. He did not condemn the failure of Peter and drive him away, but established him again as a worker who takes care of the sheep of Jesus.

The basis on which Peter could confess that he loved Jesus was not his own will, either. It was because Jesus loved Peter first, bore even the sins Peter would commit throughout his lifetime with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again and became the perfect Savior. Because he knew the love that loved him to the end and saved him from all his sins, Peter, too, could confess, *"You know that I love You."*

Therefore the three questions deepen from comparison to personal confirmation, and again to the confession that entrusts oneself to the Lord, who knows all things. At the same time,

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through the commands "Feed—Tend—Feed," they show that the heart that loves Jesus must lead on to the mission of feeding and taking care of His sheep.

[Question] 8. John 21:15–17—in what sense was *'love'* used in the three exchanges between Jesus and Peter?

The love of John 21:15–17 does not mean an emotion that Peter produced by his own will, or a loyalty he confidently put forward. It is the response of faith that came to flow out of the heart of Peter because Jesus first loved Peter and saved him from all his sins.

Peter had previously declared confidently that even if all the other disciples abandoned Jesus, he would not abandon Him. But when Jesus was actually arrested, he denied Him three times. Therefore, before the risen Jesus, Peter could not put forward his resolution or deeds and boast, "I love the Lord more than anyone." He only answered, *"You know that I love You."* He entrusted all judgment to Jesus, who knew both his weakness and the love in his heart.

The beginning of this love is not in Peter but in Jesus. Jesus, knowing even that Peter would deny Him, bore the sins of his whole lifetime with the baptism He received from John. Bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross, and He rose again from death and became the perfect Savior. Even after He rose again, He did not abandon Peter, but came to him Himself, fed him, and raised up his faith again. This is the love Peter received first.

That Peter loves Jesus means that he knows and believes in this love of salvation. Because he realized the love of Jesus, who bore even all the sins of a person as weak as himself, who had

denied the Lord, and saved him, he, too, could not help loving the Lord. Therefore this love is the confession of thanks and faith that a person who has received the grace of the remission of sins offers to Jesus, who saved him.

The word in the first question, *"Do you love Me more than these?"* shows the priority of this love. Peter, too, loved other people and himself. But he loved Jesus, who saved him, more than all those people and himself. This does not mean not to love one's family or neighbors, but means to love Jesus most, who is the source of all love and gave him eternal life.

This love does not remain only in words or emotion. Each time Jesus heard the confession of love from Peter, He commanded, *"Feed My lambs," "Tend My sheep,"* and *"Feed My sheep."* Those who love Jesus come to love the sheep Jesus loves as well. That love appears in feeding them the word of God so that their faith grows, guiding them in the right way, and waiting for them and taking care of them when they are weak. Oppressing people or using them for one's own gain is not loving the sheep of the Lord.

Therefore the love of verses 15–17 must not be understood only as a test that sorts out different kinds of love. The three questions were not to condemn the three denials of Peter, but the word that restored him and established him again with the love of Jesus. Jesus showed a love of salvation greater than the failure of Peter, and entrusted His sheep to Peter, who believed in and confessed that love.

In the end, the love spoken of here begins from knowing and believing in the love of salvation that Jesus first bestowed with the water and the blood. Those who have received that love come to love Jesus most, feed and take care of the souls Jesus has entrusted to them, and live according to the will of the Lord. That is, the love received from Jesus becomes a confession of

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faith, and that confession leads on to a life of saving and serving other souls—this is the love spoken of in verses 15–17.

[Question] 9. John 21:15–17—how are the commands "*Feed My sheep*" and "*Tend My sheep*" distinguished in terms of the work entrusted?

The word *"Feed My sheep"* means to supply the food of life to the sheep of Jesus and nurture them so that their faith grows. Here the food is the word of God, and at its center is the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus bore the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death and became the perfect Savior. When people hear and believe this word, they obtain the remission of sins and new life, and the faith of the saints who are already saved becomes even firmer.

The work of feeding the sheep is not something that ends after teaching the word once. Just as a lamb grows by eating enough food, it is to take care of the saints so that they keep learning and believing the word of God and grow into complete workers. It even includes looking at their circumstances, giving the help they need, and waiting for and teaching them until they grow enough to feed other souls themselves.

The word *"Tend My sheep"* means to guide the sheep in the right way, protect them, and rule over them. When a sheep is about to go the wrong way, one must teach it what is wrong and correct it, and lead it so that it does not fall into a dangerous way. Awakening them with the word when their faith weakens or they are drawn by the desires of the world, and taking care of them so that they live according to the will of God, is the work of tending the sheep.

Here, ‘to rule’ does not mean to press down by force or to make them submit to one’s own will. The sheep of Jesus are not the possession of a pastor or a leader, but the sheep of the Lord. Therefore one must respect them as personal beings, teach them what they do not know, wait until they grow, and the one who has gone ahead must first show an example. Oppressing and using them is not tending the sheep, but rather harming the sheep.

The difference between the two words can be summarized as follows.

The word	Central meaning	Concrete role
“Feed My sheep.”	Supplying the food of life and making them grow	Teaching the word of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and continually nurturing and taking care of them so that their faith grows
“Tend My sheep.”	Guiding them in the right way, protecting them, and ruling over them	Correcting what is wrong, protecting them from danger, and directing and leading them to live according to the will of God

The two commands are not works separated from each other. Feeding the word must be accompanied by looking at the circumstances of the sheep and guiding them rightly, and the work of tending the sheep cannot be done properly without supplying the word of God. If feeding is the nurturing that makes life grow, tending is the shepherding that protects and guides that life so that it grows in the right direction.

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That Jesus said repeatedly, "Feed—Tend—Feed," means that He entrusted His sheep to Peter completely. It is to show the love received from Jesus not only in confessing it with words, but in the work of feeding the word of life to the souls Jesus loves and leading them in the right way. Therefore, although the two words differ in role, they both make up one mission: to save, raise, and take care of the sheep to the end with the love of the Lord.

[Question] 10. John 21:15—what was the question of Jesus to Peter, *"Do you love Me more than these?"* trying to confirm?

The *"these"* that Jesus spoke of refers to the fellow disciples of Peter who were there together. Therefore this question is not a word in which He compared and evaluated whether Peter had more love than the other disciples. He asked whether Peter regarded Jesus as most precious and loved Him more than anyone around him.

The important expression in this word is *"love Me more."* People love their family and their companions, and they also love themselves and various things of the world. Jesus did not say to Peter that he must have no such love at all, but asked whether he loved Him more than all such love. That is, it is the question of whether he would regard Jesus as most precious, more than all other people and creatures, and believe in and follow Him.

This question is also related to the past of Peter. Before Jesus was arrested, Peter declared confidently that even if all the other disciples abandoned the Lord, he would never abandon Him. At that time he was confident that he was more loyal than the other

disciples and loved Jesus more. But in reality he denied Jesus three times. His confidence and his human will all collapsed.

Therefore, when the risen Jesus asked again, *"Do you love Me more than these?"* Peter did not put himself forward as in the past. He answered, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."* He did not boast by comparing himself with others, but entrusted it to the judgment of Jesus, who knows all his heart.

There is also meaning in the point that Jesus did not ask, "Do you love Me more than yourself?" but asked, *"Do you love Me more than these?"* Peter was weak and had faltered when faced with concern for his own life and the needs of the flesh. Looking at himself, he could not help thinking that he was not qualified to follow Jesus. But at least he could confess that he loved Jesus more than all the people beside him and any creature of this world. Jesus knew even that heart.

Peter was able to make this confession not because his love was strong. It was because Jesus loved him first. Jesus, even knowing that Peter would deny Him, bore all his sins with the baptism He received from John. Bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross, and He rose again from death and became his perfect Savior. He did not abandon Peter, who had failed, but came to him again, fed him, and raised up his faith.

Peter knew the love of Jesus, who loved him to the end and saved him from all his sins. So he answered in the sense of, "You have loved me like this, so how could I not love You? You know that I love You." The love of Peter was not a boast that came from his own resolution, but the response of faith and thanks to the love of salvation he had received first.

It is also important that immediately after this question came the command *"Feed My lambs."* The confession of loving Jesus most does not mean to abandon people or keep away from them. Rather, because one loves Jesus most, one is to feed the sheep

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Jesus loves with the word and take care of them rightly. One does not put the will of people or relationships with them before Jesus, but serving those people even more rightly with the love of the Lord is the life that follows this confession.

Therefore the word *"do you love Me more than these?"* is not a question telling him to boast that he is better than others. It is the question of whether, while knowing his own weakness, he would regard Jesus, who first loved him and saved him from all his sins, as more precious than anyone in the world and believe in and follow Him. And it is the word in which Jesus called Peter again, asking whether he would show that love in the mission of feeding and taking care of the sheep of the Lord.

[Question] 11. John 21:18–19—what is the foretelling of Jesus that reveals that Peter would later be martyred?

Jesus said to Peter as follows.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish" (John 21:18).

When he was young, Peter girded himself and walked where he wished. Putting his own judgment and will first, he even declared confidently that he would follow the Lord even to death for His sake. But He said that when he was old, another would gird him and carry him where he did not wish. The word *"you will stretch out your hands"* shows that Peter would be seized, his body bound, and he would be dragged to the place of death.

Its meaning is made clear in the word that follows.

"This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify

God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'" (John 21:19).

Therefore this word does not mean that Peter would simply lose his freedom when he was old, but foretold that he would be seized while preaching the gospel and be martyred. The death of Peter would be not the death of one who failed or was cast off, but a death that glorifies God. It is handed down that this foretelling was fulfilled later when Peter, amid the persecution of Rome, was martyred by being crucified upside down, saying that he could not die in the same way as the Lord.

In the past, Peter, trusting his own will, said that he would follow the Lord even to death, but when the threat of death actually came upon him, he denied Jesus three times. The risen Jesus came again to such a Peter, entrusted the sheep to him, and said, *"Follow Me,"* even to the point of martyrdom at the end. Now Peter had to become not a person who follows the Lord by his own strength and resolution, but a person who believes in the grace and love of Jesus and follows Him to the end.

Peter was able to walk this way not because his will was strong. It was because Jesus bore all the sins of Peter with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross carrying those sins, and then rose again from death and saved him completely. Because Peter believed in Jesus, who first loved him and saved him, he could preach the gospel and take care of the sheep, and at last he could glorify God even by his death.

[Question] 12. John 21:19—after Jesus spoke of the death Peter would meet, what command did He give toward the rest of his life?

After Jesus spoke of the kind of death by which Peter would

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glorify God, He commanded, *"Follow Me."*

"This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'" (John 21:19).

This word does not simply mean to walk behind Jesus and follow Him. It is the command that Peter should not go back to the life of fishing again, but devote the rest of his life to feeding and taking care of the sheep Jesus entrusted to him and preaching the gospel. Connected with the foretelling of death spoken of before, it also means to follow the way of the Lord until the moment of martyrdom.

Peter had previously trusted his own strength and declared confidently that he would follow the Lord even to death, but he was afraid of death and denied Jesus three times. Now he had to follow not by relying on his own will or boldness, but by believing in Jesus, who first loved him and saved him. Jesus bore all the sins of Peter with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and then rose again and saved him completely. The faith that believes in that grace made Peter stand up again and follow the Lord.

Therefore the word *"Follow Me"* was a new start given to Peter and his lifelong mission. It is the word telling him to leave the way of living for himself and walk the way of saving other souls, taking care of the sheep of the Lord, and at the end glorifying God even by his death. Afterward, when Peter asked about the future of another disciple, Jesus also said, *"What is that to you? You follow Me."* What Peter had to look at was not the way of another person, but the way of the Lord entrusted to him.

[Question] 13. John 21:22—how did Jesus answer Peter, who asked about the future of another disciple?

Seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved, Peter asked, *"But Lord, what about this man?"* To this, Jesus answered as follows.

"If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me" (John 21:22).

Jesus was telling Peter not to look into what would become of the future of another disciple or compare it with his own way, but to be faithful to the mission given to Peter himself. How He would guide John was a matter belonging to the Lord, and what Peter had to be concerned with was the command *"Follow Me"* spoken to him.

The word *"If I will that he remain till I come"* is not a word that decided that John would not die until the second coming of Jesus. Jesus spoke in the sense that even if He were to let John remain until then, that was not a matter for Peter to interfere with or compare. That is why verse 23, too, makes clear that Jesus did not say that that disciple would not die.

The way entrusted to Peter was to follow Jesus, feed and take care of the sheep, preach the gospel, and at last glorify God by his death. He had to walk the way entrusted to him, not calculate what mission had been given to another disciple. To follow Jesus is to believe in and preach the salvation Jesus accomplished by bearing the sin of mankind with the baptism He received from John and by the Cross and the resurrection, and to save and take care of other souls with that food of life.

Therefore the central word in the answer of Jesus is *"You follow Me."* It is the word telling him not to compare his own way with the way entrusted to another, but to carry out by faith, to the end, the mission the Lord entrusted to him.

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[Question] 14. John 21:23—as what wrong rumor did the word of Jesus about the beloved disciple spread among the believers of the early Church?

The word Jesus spoke, *"If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?"* was wrongly spread among the believers of the early Church in the sense that the disciple whom Jesus loved would not die but would remain alive until the second coming of the Lord.

"Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, 'If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?'" (John 21:23).

Jesus did not promise that that disciple would not die. He spoke as a supposition, *"If I will that he remain till I come."* Since how He would decide the future of John was the prerogative of the Lord, it meant that Peter should not ask about the way given to another disciple or compare it with his own way, but should follow the mission given to himself.

But in the process of this suppositional word being spread, it was changed into a definite prophecy. That is, the word that 'if the Lord wills, He could let him remain until the second coming' was distorted into the saying that 'that disciple will not die.' In order to correct this misunderstanding, John himself made clear that Jesus did not say that that disciple would not die.

Therefore verse 23 shows the fact that one must not take the word of the Lord out of its context before and after, or accept a word spoken as a supposition as if it were a definite promise. The center of the word of Jesus is not a prophecy about the life or death of that disciple, but the command *"You follow Me"* spoken to Peter.

[Question] 15. John 21:24–25—with what statement about the testimony and the record of the writer do the last two verses of the Gospel of John end?

The Gospel of John ends with the declaration that the testimony of the disciple who wrote this book is true, and the confession that the things Jesus did are far more than what is recorded.

"This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21:24–25).

"The disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things" refers to the Apostle John, who appeared earlier as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.' John testified of the words of Jesus and the things He did that he himself saw and heard, and he makes clear the certainty of the record with the words that his testimony is true. The Gospel of John is not a made-up story or a rumor heard from others, but the testimony of a disciple who lived with Jesus and witnessed His work.

The last verse that follows makes clear the fact that the things Jesus did are far more than what is recorded in the Gospel of John. The signs and words John recorded do not contain all the deeds of Jesus without omission. He confesses that if the things Jesus did when He came to this earth were written one by one, they would be so many that even the world could not contain the books. This means that the work and the grace of Jesus, who is the true God, are so great and abundant that they cannot all be measured by human records.

The words recorded in the Gospel of John are, among those

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many things, the events that clearly testify who Jesus is. Jesus is God, who created all things, and yet He put on human flesh and came to this earth; He bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death. He is the Son of God and the Savior, who in this way saved sinners completely.

Therefore the last two verses of the Gospel of John are the declaration that the testimony recorded in this book is true, and that the work of Jesus to which that testimony points is far greater and more abundant than even the written word. The Gospel of John ends testifying that Jesus Christ is the true God and the Savior who saved sinners. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord is always with us in our lives

< John 21:1-14 >

"After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We are going with you also.' They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, 'Children, have you any food?' They answered Him, 'No.' And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.' Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and

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although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?'—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead."

The meaning of Easter

It is Resurrection Sunday. To save mankind, Jesus humbled Himself, put on human flesh, and was born on this earth as the baby Jesus; when the time came, He received baptism from John and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, died hung on the Cross, and rose again from death and became the eternal God of those who believe. This is the meaning of Easter. Jesus was with the disciples for three years and then died hung on the Cross. And He went into the tomb and rose again, and the word we have just read speaks of Jesus appearing to the disciples for the third time. Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.

Jesus was in the tomb from Friday evening until Sunday dawn. But at dawn an angel came down from heaven and opened the door of the tomb, and there was a great earthquake on the earth. So the soldiers who were guarding the tomb all fled, and Jesus came back to life. Jesus had prophesied in advance that He would rise again three days after His death, saying, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19)*. The Jews knew this, the chief priests and the leaders knew this, and the Roman soldiers knew this too. So, wondering what they would do if He really rose again as He had said, or whether some

trick was being played, they posted soldiers in layers around the tomb and guarded it so that it could not be broken through even if a considerable enemy attacked, and so that the body could not be taken away. But when the Lord rose again, the earth shook and an angel appeared, and they were scared out of their wits and all fled. The Roman soldiers were extremely valiant, and because they were soldiers, they were men who carried out the orders of their superiors at the risk of their lives. If they had been only a little afraid, they would not have fled. They were so terrified that they did not withdraw; they all ran away.

The appearing of the risen Lord

When the Lord rose again, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. Even though the One she adored and truly believed in as her Savior and God had died hung on the Cross, she went looking for Him at the tomb in order to see Him. But the door of the tomb was open, and Jesus was not there. There were no soldiers, and there was no one. Startled, Mary ran to the disciples and told them that the tomb was empty, and the hot-tempered Peter and John ran to the tomb. That tomb was not a tomb where one is buried in the ground as we do, but a tomb where a cave is dug and blocked with a stone and the body is placed inside; Peter went straight into the tomb as soon as he came running, and John looked around. The body of Jesus was not there; the linen cloths that had wrapped the body were lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head was folded up in a place by itself. Mary, who remained outside the tomb weeping even after the disciples had gone back, saw someone standing there and, thinking he was the gardener, asked, *"If You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him" (John*

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20:15), but later she saw that it was Jesus. So Mary went to the disciples and told them that she had seen the Lord.

That the body was not there meant one of two things. Either someone had moved the body, or He had risen again. But the disciples of Jesus could not go there even if they wanted to. They could not approach, because the soldiers were standing guard. An earthquake occurred and an angel appeared and rolled away the stone door, and the Roman soldiers all ran away. When Mary said that the tomb was empty, Peter and John went there themselves, and Jesus was not in the tomb. The disciples were afraid, because the body of Jesus was not there and Mary said she had seen Jesus, but they had not seen Him with their own eyes. They were also afraid of the Roman soldiers, the chief priests, the Pharisees, and the Jews, who had seized Jesus and killed Him. They were trembling inside the house with the doors locked, for fear that they too would be seized and killed, when, though the door had not even been opened, Jesus suddenly stood in their midst and said, *"Peace be with you" (John 20:19)*. When Jesus suddenly appeared inside the room with its doors tightly locked, the disciples were startled. When Jesus showed them all the marks of the nails and spoke to them Himself, the disciples half believed and half doubted. It was real, yet they could neither believe it nor not believe it.

At that time the disciples were gathered together, but Thomas was not there. The disciples, even while saying that Jesus had really risen again, were keeping the doors tightly locked for fear that the Jews would come and seize and kill them, when Jesus appeared again inside the house and spoke to them Himself. Thomas was a man who had said that he would never believe unless he saw Jesus, and that he would believe only if he put his finger into the marks of the nails and put his hand into His side. When Jesus appeared, all the other disciples believed, but

Thomas did not believe, so Jesus said, *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29)*, but He also said, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing" (John 20:27)*. He showed him that there was the mark where He had been pierced by the spear in His side, and that there were the marks of the nails in His hands. Thomas put his hand in and confessed, *"My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28)* and said that now he really believed.

The Lord who came looking for the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias

After that, Jesus appeared to the disciples at the sea. Even though Jesus had appeared, the disciples were more afraid of the Roman soldiers and the Jews, who had seized Jesus and killed Him. They were very afraid, since they could be seized and killed merely for being the disciples of Jesus. When we read the word, it says, *"Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together" (John 21:2)*, and the sons of Zebedee are James and John. Not all the disciples were here. Since they were originally seamen, they were gathered at the seashore, and Peter said that if Jesus was not right beside him in person, he would quit this work—that although He had risen again, since Jesus was not right beside him now, he would go fishing. And a few hot-tempered men who were close to him went fishing together with him. They cast the net all night long but caught nothing, and as the day was breaking, Jesus was standing on the shore, watching them. The early dawn had passed and the day was growing bright, but even when the disciples saw Jesus, they

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did not know that it was Jesus. They did not even think, "Could Jesus really have appeared at the seashore again and come looking for us?"

When Jesus said to the disciples, *"Have you any food?" (John 21:5)*, that is, whether they had caught any fish, they said they had not, and when He said, *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat" (John 21:6)* and they cast the net, as many as one hundred and fifty-three large fish were caught. It was to the point that the net was about to tear. Even then the disciples did not know, but the Apostle John, who wrote the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation, said that the One standing on that shore and speaking to them was Jesus Himself, their Master, that Lord whom they had followed. So Peter, who had taken off his clothes, put them on and jumped into the sea and swam. And Jesus had made a fire of coals on the shore and prepared food and was waiting. He said, *"Come and eat breakfast" (John 21:12)*, and said, *"Bring some of the fish which you have just caught" (John 21:10)*, and He grilled them and gave them to the disciples. How startled Peter must have been! Even though he had experienced the resurrection of Jesus once and twice, he had gone fishing and had taken the disciples along, and this time He followed him even to where he was fishing at sea and intervened in his daily life, saying, *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat" (John 21:6)*, and when he came out and looked, it really was Jesus, and He grilled fish and ate together with them. Then Jesus spoke, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, and when Peter said, "Yes, I love You more than these," He said, *"Feed My lambs" (John 21:15)*, and again He repeated, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, and Peter said, "Yes," *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, and He said, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*. He asked the same question again, and Peter also gave the same answer. The Lord asked the

same question three times, and Peter answered the same way. After this asking and answering, Peter went about truly as an apostle, together with the disciples, preaching that Jesus had risen again.

The Lord of the resurrection, who is with us in our lives even now

It is clear that our Lord rose again. He came back to life. That He came back to life and became our Savior and gives us new life is important, but what is important is that Jesus came back to life after His death on the Cross and is now with you and me in our lives. Even when we are troubled by some problem, having a hard time, and in pain, because the Lord is alive, He knows everything about us, comforts our hearts, and, though He is not seen with the eyes, exhorts and leads us through the word, spiritually. In our lives the Lord is with us at all times. That the Lord rose again is a fact, and the Lord who rose again and ascended is with us even now as the Lord of the resurrection. We must know that He is with us as the Holy Spirit and gives us realization when we look at the word, gives us realization when we hear the word, comforts and exhorts our hearts, and rebukes us, too, when there are wrong thoughts in our hearts, and that He is with us in our lives even now.

After the Lord rose again, He kept appearing to the disciples and kept speaking. Even so, Peter could not believe, even though he had seen with his eyes and touched with his hands, and went fishing, and when he had gone fishing, the Lord appeared and said, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, and Peter could not deny it. Peter and John and the twelve disciples came to know only then that it was a fact that the Lord had risen

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again, and that He was involved in their lives and was with them. It means that they came to know that it was not over once Jesus rose again and went up, but that He would be with them in their lives forever. As the Lord went up after rising again, He promised, *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20)*. That is how He comes to us even now.

He appeared to those disciples who, in their disappointment, had gone off to catch fish, saying, "The Lord is not beside me, so how can I preach this way of the resurrection, this way of salvation? I cannot do it," and He grilled fish for them and ate together with them. But He is the One who rose again, and He is God from the beginning. He put on human flesh for a while and came to this earth, and to save us He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again. Because He rose again, when we believe in Him, we too obtain new life. Because He is the Lord of the resurrection, the God of the resurrection, He gives eternal new life to you and me and makes us never die forever.

The Lord who keeps us in the work of serving the gospel

What I want to tell you is that the Lord is with us in our lives. He is with us in the work we do, in that work we do in order to serve the gospel, and whether you and I are sad, or in pain, or having a hard time, or glad, the Lord is always by our side. He is with us when we are in danger, too. When one actually lives a life of faith, one goes through many such things. Once, we went to a certain event venue where many foreigners come, in order to distribute our books to the foreigners. But there were some rough people there who, saying they were clearing the place,

were driving out all the peddlers. We were not merchants, and since we had to preach the gospel to the foreigners with these books, which we had printed by raising the funds with difficulty, we could not go back either. When they came crowding toward us, since if we fought we could not preach the gospel and had no chance of winning either, I prayed, “Lord, we have to distribute the books; please help us.” But when they came close, they suddenly straightened their posture and said that we were doing a truly precious work. I was startled. When I said that we were not people who had come to sell goods, and that since these books preach Jesus, we would withdraw after distributing them to the foreigners, they said to keep going, and asked why we should leave when we were doing such a precious work. Going through such things, I came to know that the Lord truly helps much in the things we do.

As we did various kinds of work here, there were many dangerous things, too. There were times when we did the work and did not receive payment, and we nearly clashed with rough people, and there were times when we were threatened because our circumstances were difficult. Every time that happened, I prayed to the Lord. I said only this: “Lord, our lives depend on this spread of the gospel, so please keep us.” The Lord kept us every time that happened, whenever we were in need, whenever we were in danger. In other words, the Lord is alive and working even now. These are things that actually happened.

After I met the Lord, I have never stood up with force even in the face of such threats. I only spoke with words, and every time, the Lord kept me. I am not saying that I am great. In the work we do in order to serve the gospel, there are truly many dangerous things. When we started the work we do, countless people told me that I was crazy, that I was doing something that could never be done. At that time I prayed, “Lord, I cannot do it,

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but You can. Even the people of the world do it, so how could we not do it? Please help us to be able to do it; please make us able to succeed." The Lord gave wisdom at each and every time, made us meet suitable people, too, and made us do it. It has been so until now. The Lord has kept me, kept you, and kept the work we do, the spread of the gospel, and the overseas mission. Overseas, someone initially rejected our book without even reading it. However, we urged him to read it, as it is the most biblical and accurate work anywhere in the Christian world; in the end, he examined and accepted it, and it continues to be spread today.

I am not telling this in order to boast of myself. I am saying that the Lord rose again and is alive, and that even now, though He is not seen with the eyes of the flesh, He dwells with us and is working together with us. The Lord is with us even now. The reason we do not feel that the Lord is with us is that we do not do it with the heart that we are truly doing only the work of the Lord. When we do it with the heart that this work is the work of the Lord, that this work and that work we do are all the work of the Lord, we can experience that the Lord is with us. If we do not have such a heart and just do it half-heartedly, we cannot experience that the Lord is alive now and is beside you and me, helping us. The Lord is alive now. The Lord went up, but He is in our hearts as the Holy Spirit. There are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and that the Lord is with us means that the Holy Spirit is with us, and God the Holy Spirit is the same one God as the Lord. That is why He is with us until the end of the age and is alive. We must know it so and live so.

The Lord is with us in our lives. He is with us in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in that work of serving it. He is with you and me when we are sad and in danger, too. The Lord is not One who entrusts the work to us and tells us

to handle it ourselves. He is One who is with us, helps us, and keeps us. The Lord is the Lord who is with us even now until the end of the age. I believe that. That is why I have carried on the work until now. How much sacrifice did the Lord make when He came to this earth to save us, mankind? Though He Himself is God, He is the One who bore even the death of the flesh, even that suffering, for the creatures. That Lord rose again and is with us now, is working together with us, and is helping us even now. He is the One who speaks within us even when we are martyred, and the One who makes us able to do it bravely and boldly even when we are martyred.

Human beings cannot live forever, but we live forever. The people of the world do all kinds of things to make it possible for people to live long, at least to some extent, even if they cannot live forever. Even human beings do so; how much more, then, God, who is the Lord of life? The Lord who said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25)*, is the Lord of life, so rising again is something He can do without any difficulty at all. The Lord went even into the tomb after being hung on the Cross and came out, in order to remove our sins and to pay the price of our sins righteously; He is not a Lord who is bound there. The Lord solves both our death and our resurrection for us. He solves them abundantly. He abundantly takes care of it for you and me—our dying and coming back to life again.

The more we look at the word, the more we come to know how great a work God does, and the more we come to believe that the Lord rose again and is with us in our lives even now. Because He is with us even now, even if we do not believe, the work we are doing now is being done. Who would believe that the gospel is being preached to the whole world from this small gathering? No one believes it. It is being done because the Lord

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is with us. It is not being done because I am smart, but because the Lord is with us. The things we do in the world are likewise being done because the Lord is with us. What I am saying is that I want to benefit people and receive love, not that I want to do evil to people and receive love. It is that we want to benefit the people of the world and receive a payment suitable for it, and with it serve the gospel and also live well ourselves, and if there is more to spare, show mercy to the people of the world as well. Because the Lord is with us, that work is possible. We have done so until now, and we will have to do so in the future as well.

We must be careful in this age. Because life is so hard for people, they fall into the delusion of wondering why only they should suffer like this and only they should be dragged around like this, and why those people live so well, and they get angry and vent their anger, and things happen in which they harm others. I want you to know the fact that most people are having a very hard time but cannot bring themselves to say so for the sake of saving face, and that people who have reached the point where their anger is about to explode are walking around the streets. When one is poor and wretched, one gets angry even at another person's laughing. So we must live wisely. The Bible says, *"Weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15)*. If another person is grieving and you laugh and chatter too boisterously in front of him, you will come to harm. We must also conduct ourselves well. Until that day the Lord comes, we must live well, wisely and by faith.

We give thanks that the Lord came back to life and rose again. We give thanks before the Lord that He has given us new life, and that He rose again and is always beside us now and helps us. We give thanks to the Lord, who is with us even now and helps us and blesses us, who has led us until now, and who is alive forever and is with us. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

You know that I love You

< John 21:1-18 >

"After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We are going with you also.' They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, 'Children, have you any food?' They answered Him, 'No.' And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.' Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' Yet none of the

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disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?'—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.'"

"Do you love Me more than these?"

Jesus said to Peter, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. But in fact, Peter was a man who had denied Jesus three times. When a servant girl in the courtyard of the high priest asked, *"You also were with Jesus of Galilee" (Matthew 26:69)* and *"You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?" (John 18:17)*, Peter said, absolutely not—that he had never even been with that man, and that he absolutely did not know such a person. We cannot know with what words he cursed, but he was a man who had cursed and sworn and denied

three times that he absolutely did not know Him.

Peter was very weak. While the One who was his Savior and Lord was being tried in court and treated as a criminal, he said that he did not know the One who was his teacher and Lord. He denied Him three times, cursing and swearing. That is what human weakness is. To deny like that in an instant when things are unfavorable is human weakness. Peter denied Him three times, heard the news that Jesus had died nailed to the Cross, and after that went to Galilee. Even though Jesus had risen again and come looking for him and revealed Himself to him, since Jesus was not beside him as in the old days, he wondered whether he was dreaming now, and then, since he had to make a living, he said, "Let us go fishing," and led all the other disciples out to go fishing.

But Jesus came looking for them and said, *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat" (John 21:6),* and when the disciples cast it as He said, many fish were caught. At first the disciples did not really know who He was, but when they realized that it was Jesus, Peter put on his outer garment and swam and went before Jesus, who had made a fire of coals on the shore and was grilling fish. When all the disciples had come out, Jesus said, *"Come and eat breakfast" (John 21:12)* and ate the grilled fish and bread together with them on the spot. It means that Jesus had risen again, and that with that risen body He ate food together with the disciples. And now He asked a question. He asked as many as three times, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. Up to the second time Peter answered, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" (John 21:16),* and the third time he answered, grieved, *"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17).*

When our Lord asked Peter three times in a row, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15),* it says that Peter was grieved in his heart. He was pricked in his heart, and it hurt.

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Peter's heart truly hurt, because it seemed that the Lord kept touching the sore spot, and it seemed that He was making him admit that he loved the Lord. So, grieved, he made the confession of faith: Lord, do You not know everything? Do You not know everything about me? Do You not know everything—not only that I denied You three times because of my weakness, but also the road ahead of me, even what will become of me in the future? Then why do You keep asking me this? *"You know that I love You" (John 21:17)*.

The heart that loves the world and the love for the Lord

Before this question, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, we too must truly think it over and gather up our hearts again. The Apostle John said, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15)*. It means that if one loves the world, the heart that loves God disappears. We are people who can truly love the world. We can love ourselves, we can love the opposite sex, we can love material things, and we can love honor. We are people who can love everything in the world that God made. But the Lord asks us, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. Then we must know that we, too, are people who cannot help confessing like Peter, who made the confession of faith as many as three times, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*.

We truly love the things in the world. To say that we do not love them is a downright lie. We have a heart that loves them; it is only that we do not act on it because it is not right, so why would there be no heart that loves them? At times we love them,

like them, and follow after them. Just as a certain sister said that when she looked at a freshman welcome party from afar, it seemed fantastic and she had a dream that it would be great fun to go, but when she actually went, it was nothing much, so we too at times love the things in the world and follow after them. It is not that there is none of that.

But when we compare the world and the things in the world—that is, ourselves, the opposite sex, material things, honor, and pleasure, all these things—with the Lord, however good they may be and however lovely they may be, they cannot be exchanged for the Lord. As Peter said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, when the Lord has removed all our sins, made us the children of God, and removed our sins abundantly, how can we leave the Lord? How can we forsake the Lord? How can we betray the Lord? The Lord has abundantly removed all our sins. With the love of God the Father, with the redemption of Jesus Christ, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished with the water and the blood, He has abundantly removed our sins and abundantly loved us; so the question is, even though we have a heart that loves the world, how could we forsake that love and follow the world without even thinking?

There will be times when a conflict arises in our hearts because there is in us a heart that loves the world. There may even be times when we ourselves feel that our whole heart is falling into the world. There will be times when we lament over ourselves as we see for ourselves that, although we have been saved, what we really love are the things in the world, and that there is this much of a heart that loves the world in us—saying, "Will I be able to live a life of faith properly? With so much of a heart that loves the world, how can I live a life of faith to the end? It seems I cannot." We too, like Peter, are people who can look at our own

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weakness, be grieved, and say, "Let us go fishing."

But are we people who really cannot help following the world because the world is lovely? It is a fact that if a heart that loves the world is in our hearts, the heart that loves God disappears, and it is also a fact that we have such weakness. But when we follow the world, we follow it because our hearts have been taken captive; if we really come to our senses and compare our Lord and the world on the scales, none of them is lovelier than Jesus. We come to know that none of them—not ourselves, not the opposite sex, not material things, not honor, not pleasure—is lovelier than the Lord. When the Lord has abundantly removed our sins, saved us with love, and made us sinless, how can we leave the Lord? If we look only at our hearts that have been taken captive by the world, we have the weakness of not being able to help leaving the Lord, but if we reckon up that the Lord has saved us, that He has delivered us from sin, and that He has abundantly removed our sins and made us the people of God, we can never forsake the Lord and follow the world.

The confession of Peter, whose own righteousness was broken

When we confess like Peter, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, our Lord speaks. *"Feed My lambs" (John 21:15)*. Again He says, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, and when we answer, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, He says, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*, that is, rule over them and raise them. And because He asked the same question a third time, Peter was grieved in his heart. He was grieved, wondering what the Lord was going to do with him over his having denied Jesus three times, or whether he really had to

say this. Peter was a man who had been full of confidence in the old days. He was a man who had been full of his own righteousness. He was a man who had said, *"Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble" (Matthew 26:33)*, and that he would follow Him even to death.

But when such a thing actually came upon him, Peter denied Jesus three times. Now Peter's own righteousness, his own rightness, his own will, was broken. So Peter confessed that the Lord knows everything—that when in the old days he had said that even if all the disciples forsook Him, he would not forsake the Lord, the Lord had said, *"This night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Matthew 26:34)*, and it had come to pass just so; that the Lord knows everything that will happen to him, and that he could not make guarantees about the future either. The Lord knows everything about me. He knows the past, the present, and the future, even what I will do in the future. Nevertheless, it is *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. It is because the Lord loved Peter. Because the Lord had removed all those sins, Peter could say before the Lord that he loved the Lord, that he loved the Lord more than these.

The unconditional love of God

Here, the love in *"do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, which Jesus asked three times, speaks of agape love, that is, unconditional love. That love which is bestowed freely and unconditionally is called the love of God, agape love. That love which does not demand anything but, because the one who loves does so unconditionally, supplies, loves, and blesses because it loves—that love is agape love. The love with which God loved us was precisely this unconditional love. *"God so loved the*

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world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). It means that God loved you and me unconditionally. The love with which He made us in the image of God and with which, when we fell for the enticement of Satan the devil, Jesus Himself had that sin which Satan the devil brought transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, Himself received the judgment for sin on the Cross, rose again, and saved us, and the love with which He made us the children of God—that love was the unconditional love of God.

God loved us. He removed all our sins. He removed them abundantly and made us the children of God. Therefore, although you and I are people with the weakness of finding this world lovely and being unable to help following this world, when we think, and think again, and chew over again that infinite love of God—how completely the Lord removed our sins, how He saved us, and what authority He gave us after saving us—even though we have a heart that loves the world, we cannot possibly follow the world, and we cannot love the world more than the Lord.

When Jesus asked Peter, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, He used the word 'more.' If He had asked, "Do you love this world? Do you have no heart that loves the world? You must not have one," Peter would not have been able to speak. In fact, Peter loved the net and loved the fish. He loved his old occupation, he loved the friends he had known in the old days, he longed for his old hometown, and he liked all of those things. Peter was originally a fisherman of the Sea of Galilee, and whenever he went back to the Sea of Galilee, there were people who would lend him a boat, there were relatives, there were the elders of the village, and there were people who would lend him a net. That net he had loved may even have still been

there until then, waiting for its owner. Peter had a heart that loved the world, but he did not love it more than the Lord. He loved the Lord more.

Because the Lord loved us first

To you and me as well, our Lord came, received baptism from John and abundantly had all our sins transferred to Him, and, so that we would never become sinners again, died on the Cross, shedding His blood, rose again, and saved us. He gave us *"the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)*, and He gave us heaven as well. He made us righteous and made us sinless. Even though we are lacking, He abundantly removed our sins, bestowed grace on us so that we could never become sinners again, and gave us salvation. Then how could we love the world more than Jesus? If Jesus came to you and me now, looked around at each one of us, and asked, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, what would we answer? We would answer, "Yes," *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, "I love the world too, and I am often dragged away by it, but I love the Lord more than anything in this world." We have such a heart and such faith.

The reason we cannot help confessing that we have more love for the Lord than for the world is that the Lord loved us first. Because the Lord loved us first, because He abundantly removed our sins, because He loved us so that we could never leave the Lord even if we betrayed Him, we can never leave Him. We cannot help giving that answer, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, not three times but forever.

You and I are lacking and weak, and so we have a heart that loves the world. It is not that we do not have it. But do not try

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too hard to hide it. Recognize and admit for yourselves that you have a heart that loves the world. And see whom you love more when you compare it with the Lord. There is a heart that loves the Lord more. It is because the Lord abundantly removed the sins of us who are so lacking, gave us abundant blessings, and gave us that love, and so has made us into the people of the Lord, who cannot help loving the Lord more. That is why we cannot help loving the Lord more. However lovely this world may be, even though we have a heart that loves the world, we cannot help loving the Lord more. It is because the Lord has made us so and has given us such love.

Do you have a heart that loves this world? You do. That cannot be denied. Because we are human, we have a heart that loves this world. But do we love the world more than the Lord? Is it worth loving more? No. However weak we may be, and though we have a heart that loves the world and there are times when we follow the world, the Lord has made us sinless people, and even when we are lacking, He does not blame us for our lack or judge us, and He has removed all our sins, and so we cannot help loving the Lord more than anything in this world.

This is a spiritual matter. It is not because we do not love the world that we believe in and follow God. We have a heart that loves the world, but because the love with which the Lord loved us is so great, we are deeply moved by that love, and by believing in that love we cannot help loving the Lord more. Then does it mean that it is all right to love the world? If one loves the world, the love of the Father disappears from that heart. The heart that loves God disappears, and one's life of faith comes to an end, too. Because we love the Lord more, even though we have a heart that loves the world, we can put that love in order, give more of our hearts to the Lord, and love the Lord more and follow Him. We follow the Lord because we love Him. We

follow the Lord because we love Him and because we are thankful. If we do not love Him, we cannot follow Him. But the love of the Lord is in us. That we are sinless and that we have become the children of God is the love of God, and because that love has been poured into our hearts, souls, and bodies, because He loved us, we love the Lord because we cannot help loving Him. That is why the Bible says, *"Love will cover a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8)* and *"perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18)*.

Dear fellow believers, think about it quietly. Did the Lord love you more, or did the world love you more? Think once about whom we cannot help loving more, between the world and the Lord, and about who loved you more. Is it the Lord, or is it the world? When we know that the Lord cherished and loved us more than the world did, we come to love the Lord more. If we believe that the world loved us more, we come to love the world. We come to love the Lord in the same proportion as we know the love of God. According to how much we know, and according to how much we believe, how much God loved us, how much He loved you, we too can love the Lord. Jesus loved us abundantly. However lacking we may be, He removed even all those sins of our shortcomings. Even the sins with which we opposed Him—as long as we do not deny this one thing alone, that Jesus is my Savior and that Jesus saved me with the water and the blood—our Lord has removed all our sins and has already remitted them all. And He has made us the people of God, given us the blessings of the world to come, and made us His children in this present world as well. And because He wants to walk together with us, He dwells with us. Our Lord is in the hearts of you and me and becomes our friend. When He says, "Do you know that I have loved you like this?" we say, "Yes, I know; I love You too, Lord," and when He says, "What do you

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want to do? Do you not want to preach this gospel?" we say, "I want to preach the gospel like this, but it is not going well, so please help me, Lord." The Lord, as a close friend, helps us, exhorts us, and holds us up.

"To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life"

How much do you and I know the love of God, and do we believe in the love of God? God has saved you and me and made us righteous people without sin. When God has loved us like this, where would we go? Peter said to Jesus, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68)*. When people brought two fish and five barley loaves, that is, the one lunch of a child, Jesus took it, laid His two hands on it, blessed it, and told them to distribute it, and however much they distributed, it kept remaining in it. So the Bible says that five thousand able-bodied men alone ate, and if the women and children are all added, more than ten thousand people all ate, and yet twelve baskets were left over.

All the people who had been given that bread for the flesh and eaten it came looking for Jesus. They came in the hope of being given such bread to eat again, but when Jesus said that He would not give such bread anymore, and that if they had followed Him in order to get such bread to eat, they should go, the people were disappointed and went back. Many people came looking for Jesus and then left. At that time Jesus asked the disciples, *"Do you also want to go away?" (John 6:67)*. Peter answered and said to Jesus: the words of eternal life are with You, so where would we go? The word that has eternal life is with You, so where are You telling us to go?

That we cannot leave such a Jesus is an answer that is all too clear. Nevertheless, because we too are weak, we may love the world and perhaps be dragged away by the world. But I want you to remember without fail that God loved you more, and that He loves you even now. Our Lord wants to receive a clear confession of faith, a confession of belief, a confession of love, from within our hearts. He asks, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, do you love Me more than all these people? At such a time we must truly make the confession of love rightly, by faith, with a heart that loves God. Since the Lord knows everything, we must become people who can make by faith, every day, this confession of love: *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, You know everything, Lord, that I have become one who cannot help loving You.

Dear fellow believers, though we are truly lacking, that love with which the Lord loved us was greater than our foolishness of being tempted by the world and following after the world, and greater than the sins we commit. Because it is greater, we cannot help loving the Lord. "Lord, I love You. I love You more than all these people." It is truly so. We must make this confession of love often. And we must live the life of a servant of God on this earth, walking together with the Lord—believing in that Lord who has loved us infinitely, entrusting everything to Him, asking Him in prayer, relying on Him by faith, waiting, and receiving. So I wish that I myself and all of us may become saints who know the heart of the Lord and the will of the Lord and live so, who live a life of loving God more than these people all our lives until that day the Lord comes, and then go. I want the Lord to give us faith and make us live as such people of faith, as such servants, as such people, and to bless us so that we can live a life of loving the Lord to the end, loving our Lord more than the things in this world, and following the Lord. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Do you love Me more than these?

< John 21:1-19 >

"After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We are going with you also.' They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, 'Children, have you any food?' They answered Him, 'No.' And He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.' Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and

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although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?'—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'"

The disciples who went fishing in disappointment

I believe that a life of following the Lord and living with the Lord, loving the Lord, is a truly happy and blessed life. As we go on following the Lord, there are so many things to be thankful for, and also so many difficult things and so many things in the world that steal our hearts. The disciples who had followed Jesus

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Christ were also disappointed after Jesus Christ was nailed to the Cross. Even though they had confirmed with their own eyes that Jesus Christ had risen again, they were still disappointed. It was because Jesus Christ did not keep on staying with them. Because He appeared for a while and then disappeared, their disappointment was still great. So the disappointed people gathered together in one place. Nathanael, who had waited for the kingdom of God under the fig tree, doubting Thomas, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, and Peter—people like these all gathered together.

When they were all gathered together, discouraged, they truly had no hope. So Simon Peter said that he was now going fishing, that he would go back to the old days and catch fish. He said, "The Lord is not here either; though the Lord did appear for a while, did He not disappear again? He is not with us, so what are we to do? Let us go fishing." Peter was originally from Galilee and a man who caught fish in the Sea of Tiberias. So we see Peter going out to sea together with the disciples who had followed the Lord, casting the net and catching fish. Peter and the disciples went out in disappointment and fished, but they caught nothing. But Jesus appeared and said, *"Children, have you any food?" (John 21:5),* and they answered that they had none, and when He said, *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some" (John 21:6)* and they cast it, there were so many fish that they could not draw in the net. Fishing all night long and catching no fish, they must have said, "This is strange; has our old skill declined? What is going on?" When the moon rises, the fish like the moonlight and come out to the shallows and jump, so one gets to see that there are many fish, but even though they cast the net all night long in every place where fish were likely to be, there were no fish. But our Lord appeared and said, *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat"*

(John 21:6), and when they cast it, they caught many fish.

Peter, too, must have been glad to catch many fish. But the disciple whom Jesus loved said, *"It is the Lord!" (John 21:7)*. He meant that the One speaking to them now from that shore was the Lord Himself, that the Lord who had appeared twice had appeared again. It seems that John, who wrote this Gospel, wrote it this way so as not to reveal himself. When Peter heard that it was the Lord, he, who had taken off his clothes, put on his outer garment and jumped into the sea and came out to the shore and met the Lord. Seeing that Peter, a former seaman, put on his clothes first when he heard that it was the Lord, it seems that his reverence for the Lord had deepened that much. How glad the disciples must have been! After Jesus Christ died on the Cross, He had appeared twice, and this was the third time. He appeared when the disciples were inside the house, and when the two disciples were going down to Emmaus in disappointment, Jesus appeared and explained to them the meaning of the word, that what all the prophets of the Old Testament had written was precisely about Him, and their hearts burned within them, and only then did they confirm that the One speaking to them was Jesus and try to have Him stay, but He had already disappeared. But this time He appeared for the third time, so how glad they must have been! Peter and the disciples must have been in good spirits because they had caught many fish. But the joy of meeting the Lord must have been greater than this joy of catching fish.

The Lord had grilled fish on the shore and was waiting, having prepared breakfast. *"Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?'—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish" (John 21:12–13)*. Jesus set out the whole breakfast and gave it to the disciples to eat. But because the disciples knew that it was the

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Lord, none of them dared ask who He was. At first they had wondered whether He was a ghost, but now that Jesus, who had risen from the dead, had appeared for the third time, there was no need to tremble as in the old days, wondering whether He was a ghost, and because it was so certain, none of them asked whether He was really the Lord, or whether He had risen again. The disciples received what the Lord gave them and ate. After having them eat breakfast like this, Jesus spoke to Peter. *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. Then Peter answered, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*.

The love for the Lord at the center of Peter's heart

What did Peter say? He said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. In Peter's heart there was a heart that had truly known and believed in our Lord as his own Lord, as the Lord who had saved him, and that had believed that He is the Son of God and followed Him. Peter was the first man to make the confession of faith. But Peter, discouraged, went to the seashore and caught fish because the Lord was not there. Although he caught fish, there was no true satisfaction. Peter was together with the disciples and was something like their leader, but there was no satisfaction even in catching fish, and whatever he did, after Jesus Christ died on the Cross, rose again, and disappeared, there was no satisfaction in Peter's heart.

So when He asked Simon Peter, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, what was in his heart came out without hesitation. What is in a person's heart tends to come out readily. It is *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. Of course, Peter was ashamed to face Jesus Christ. He had betrayed Jesus Christ,

cursed, and denied Him three times. But Peter knew that our Lord was truly his own Lord, and Peter already believed that our Lord was the Lord who had had all his faults and sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and had removed all the sins of the world on the Cross. That is why from within that heart the confession came out: *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. It means that in Peter's heart there truly was a great deal of the heart that loved the Lord. Nothing in this world other than Jesus could give Peter's heart satisfaction.

When the fish had not been caught and then so many were caught that they could not draw in the net, Peter and the disciples could rejoice because of the fish, too. It means that they could rejoice because of the fish, too, saying, "Lord, thank You so much for letting us catch so many fish." But when he met Jesus Christ and ate the food that Jesus Christ gave him, and when Jesus asked him, in Peter's heart there was only the heart that longed for the Lord.

If Jesus Christ appeared to you and me today and asked, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, do you love Me more than these fish, do you love Me more than the honor this world gives?—I know that there is in our hearts a spirit that can truly answer, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. This heart is in the hearts of the saints who have received the remission of sins. It means that nothing in this world—no honor, no beauty, no wealth, no happiness—can be liked more than that love with which we love our Lord. It is, "Lord, I love You more than these fish, more than this wealth, more than happiness, more than beauty, more than any pleasure, more than anything."

Let us look deep into our hearts. We come into contact with many things of the world. As we come into contact with many things, if we ask and answer ourselves whether these things in

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the world are really worth loving more than the Lord, they are not worth loving more than the Lord. Truly, in our hearts the Lord is lovelier, the Lord is better, the Lord brings more satisfaction to our hearts, and the Lord is more precious. At times the hearts of the saints are taken captive by something of the world, and although it is not their Lord and is not worth loving more than the Lord, their hearts are deluded and they fall into the delusion that it seems lovelier. But we must know that, when we come to know them, those things are truly things that cannot be loved more than the Lord. What about you and me? Are we not often deluded by the things in this world? We are tempted. At such times, if someone tempts you by giving you something like fish or something like wealth, can you love that more than the Lord?

Only when we love the Lord first can we tend the sheep rightly

Here, the fish speak of the saints. ‘These’ speaks of souls, and there is a difference according to which is greater in the servants of God: their love for the saints or their love for the Lord. That the servants of God love the saints is also precious, and it is not that they lack that heart. But it means that their love for the Lord must be greater than their love for the saints. Their love for the Lord must be greater than their love for souls. He used the comparative, *“Do you love Me more than these?” (John 21:15)*, which do you love more? Can we love people more than the Lord? Can we love any material thing or any beautiful thing in this world more than our Lord? They are not worth loving more. When we truly love the Lord, when we come to regard the Lord as more precious and love the Lord more, we can truly do

precious things in the Lord.

At times the servants of God cling to a saint who has received the remission of sins and are at a loss. But loving only the saints too much is also a great sin. The One most worthy of love before God is precisely our Lord. When we love the Lord, we can truly guide the saints rightly, teach them rightly, love them rightly, and lead them rightly. It means that the leader who first of all loves the Lord the most can truly guide the saints rightly and live rightly. What about you? You have families; do you love the Lord more than your families? When you love the Lord more, your families receive salvation, and when you truly come to love the Lord more, your families are helped beautifully before the Lord. But what happens if you love only your own family or your own things more than the Lord? If so, self-destruction comes. That becomes an idol, and if so, even if you ask the Lord for help, the Lord does not answer your prayer. It is because you love that more than the Lord.

Our Lord asked Peter, that is, the worker of God, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. 'These' is a word He said with reference to the disciples who were there at that time. It means, do you love Me more than the fellow workers you have worked with, more than all those people who truly come close to you and help you and comfort you? When Peter said, "Yes," *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, He said, *"Feed My lambs" (John 21:15)*. God says so to the servant of God, and He says so to the saints as well. It means that He is asking, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, do you really love Me more than the people around you, the people who benefit you? Do you love our Lord more than the people around us? That is what is right. It means that when our hearts truly become so and there is a heart that loves the Lord, our Lord says, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)* and entrusts His sheep to that servant who

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loves only the Lord.

I think about the hearts of our saints. Do I love the Lord more than these? Yes, I love the Lord more, I ask and answer myself in my heart. If He quietly asked our saints, too, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, do you love Me more than anything of the world?—and if they examined whether there is truly a heart that says, "I love the Lord more than these things," I believe that if they truly regard the Lord as precious and know the Lord rightly, they love the Lord more than anything in this world. But there are times when they bury that heart and follow after the things of the world and are swayed because of the things of the world. When we see such things, the heart that truly loves the Lord must arise in the hearts of the saints, in the hearts of the servants of God. It must be awakened. It means that the heart that loves the Lord more than these people is in our hearts, that salvation and that love which our Lord has accomplished are in our hearts, but that it may be asleep in our hearts. It means that there is in our hearts something like a seed hidden in the soil, but the soil is so thick that the sprout of new life cannot come up.

Is the Lord not lovelier than anything in this world? The Lord has saved you and me. The Lord has guaranteed the eternal kingdom to you and me, and has exalted us above every creature in this world. The Lord has given you and me a love greater than any love, a love more precious than His own life. He has given us His whole heart, and He has given us all His best things. Those who have received that love are precisely those who have received the remission of sins. Have you received love from the Lord? Have you been saved from sin through the Lord? Have you become the children of God through the Lord? Have you obtained happiness through the Lord? Have you obtained through the Lord the joy and gladness of heart, eternal life, and every blessing and delight? Have you obtained the truth and

obtained life? If you have obtained them through the Lord, if the Lord has given them to you, we must truly be able to confess, "You know that I love You more than these." I believe that if only you awaken that which is in your hearts, you will surely love the Lord more than anything in this world. It means that although we live by all the things of this world, they cannot be exchanged for what the Lord has given us and for the Lord's having loved us, or for our loving the Lord.

Do you know how much of a heart that loves themselves there is in the hearts of the saints? There is more love for themselves than love for the Lord. Do you know how much they love their own things? Do you love the Lord more than your own things? When we truly love the Lord, we can give thanks before the Lord for ourselves and for what we have, and without serving it as an idol, we can love the Lord and follow the Lord and serve the Lord. If our love for our own things is greater than our love for the Lord, we cannot follow the Lord. Are the things you have really so lovely, compared with the Lord, that you could forsake the Lord for them? They are not. There are times when we are being deceived. It means that there are times in our hearts when we wrongly think that our possessions, what we have, are more precious than the Lord. If we analyze it strictly, we will come to know that they cannot be compared with the Lord, that it is right to love the Lord more, and that the Lord is lovelier. Therefore, leaving what we have as it is, we can give thanks before the Lord and follow the Lord, serve the Lord, and tend the flock the Lord has entrusted to us. Our Lord has given us that heart that can love the Lord more than our own things. He has granted in our hearts the heart that loves the Lord, the heart that praises the Lord, and the heart that rejoices in the Lord. It means that our Lord gave the heart that loves the Lord to Peter, and that He has given it to you and me as well. When Jesus said the second time,

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"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" (John 21:16), Peter answered, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, and the Lord said, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*. It means that when the heart that loves the Lord, the heart that loves the Lord more than any people or material things or anything in this world, is in our hearts, the Lord entrusts souls to us and entrusts us with the work of ruling over souls.

The Lord who loved Peter, with all his many faults, to the end

If Peter had been an ungrateful man, he would have forgotten the grace that God had clothed him with, but Peter was a man who, even while saying he followed the Lord, had all kinds of faults. There are few people with as many faults as Peter. That is why even the hymn sings that He led Peter, who had many faults. When Jesus was being questioned before the high priest, Peter was warming himself at the fire at a distance, and when a certain servant girl came and looked him in the face and said that he, too, was one of that man's group, he denied it, saying that he was absolutely not one of that man's group, that he absolutely did not know such a man, and how could he be one of that man's group. He denied once and denied twice, and the third time he cursed and swore, saying that he did not know such a man at all. But at that moment, Jesus, who was being questioned, turned His eyes toward Peter. Their eyes met. And at that very moment, the rooster crowed. The word *"this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Matthew 26:34)* came to his mind, and Peter's heart collapsed. While the Lord was alive, he had said that even if all forsook the Lord, he would follow the Lord, but now, in this situation, when a servant girl came and looked

him right in the face, and looked once at Jesus, too, and said that he, too, was one of that man's group, he said no, and the third time he even cursed, asking how he could be the same kind of person as such a man, and at that moment he came to look at Jesus. At that moment the rooster crowed, and what Jesus Christ had said came to his mind.

Was it only that word that came to his mind? The word Jesus had said while washing Peter's feet, *"What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this" (John 13:7)*, must have come to his mind, too. Peter had said, "Lord, You cannot wash my feet; how can You wash my feet?" but when Jesus said, *"If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me" (John 13:8)*, he said that it would not do to have no part with Him, so please wash them, and if it was the Lord's wish, wash them, and held out his feet. All those things he had heard at that time must have come to his mind. Now Jesus Christ came looking for Peter and said the second time, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, and he said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, and He said, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*. Where did the heart that loved the Lord in Peter's heart come from? Peter was one who had already experienced the love of Jesus Christ and one who knew that truth. When our Lord had followed him around like that and loved him and told him that He loved him, and had had all his faults and sins—the fault of cursing, the fault of betraying, and all those sins—entirely transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John and had removed them all, how could he say that he did not love the Lord?

Our Lord speaks to you and me as well. He says that He has removed all our fundamental sins and also the faults we commit after believing in the Lord while living on this earth. He says that He has removed those, too, and that He removed them long ago already. It means that our Lord is saying that He knew it would

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be so and loved you, and loved you to the end. Then how could we say that we do not know the Lord? It is *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*—as if to say, Lord, You are truly my Savior and One worthy of my love; I truly love You. Has our Lord not given you such love? Has God not removed all your faults? Everything lacking, every mistake, even what was cursed—our Lord Himself had all those sins transferred to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and He Himself suffered the pain of the Cross in our place. It means that He died in our place, rose again for us, and gave His own life to us in order to give us life. Then how could we love anything else more than the Lord? Because the Lord loved us first, we too cannot help loving the Lord. That is why Peter said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, and the Lord said, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*. One who fully knows the love of the Lord can love the Lord and can tend the flock the Lord has entrusted.

Dear fellow believers, is it not so with you and with me? Our Lord had all the sins we commit all our lives transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John and removed them. It is because He removed them all that the Lord is lovely and we follow the Lord; if He had not removed them all, how could we follow Him? If we followed Him as far as our strength allowed and then did too much wrong, we would have to turn back, if we had any sense of shame. But our Lord has removed all our sins and faults. Even all those sins that come to light one by one, as when dust is shaken out, have all disappeared. Where is there anyone who has loved us, mankind, and us, the saints, like this? That is why, like Peter, we say, "You know that I love You more than these."

Those who have received love become servants of their own accord and serve

Only those who have received this love come to love the Lord and become the servants of the Lord, and become the servants of the Lord of their own accord. They humble themselves of their own accord and serve others and serve souls from the position of a servant, and from the position of a servant they serve the tasks and the flock the Lord has entrusted. So the Church of God has been formed so that all the saints may become servants of their own accord and serve the Lord, and that is why it preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to souls and serves the Lord. Dear fellow believers, how good is the delight of serving our Lord? How could there be the delight of serving the gospel, and of serving the gospel together and serving one another, if it were not for the heart that loves the Lord? Of course, we would also serve because we are one body, but at any rate, if it is a work for the Lord, if it is a work the Lord is pleased with, all of us serve. Is it not because all of us have received the love of the Lord that we voluntarily become servants in every area and serve, in order to do the work the Lord is pleased with? It is, "You know that I love You more than these people, more than these; because You loved me first, I cannot forsake Your love and I cannot help loving You; I love You." How good is that heart that wants to feed something, whatever it may be, to the brothers and sisters who are serving with difficulty? To love those who have received love from the Lord is precisely to love the Lord. Why do we serve the Lord like this? Because the Lord loved us first, we love the Lord. Where in our hearts is there anyone more precious than our Lord? Nothing in this world can be more precious than the Lord.

Lord, I love You. I love You more than these people, more

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than these things. Our Lord says to us, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, telling us to regard the Lord as more precious, to love the Lord more, and to follow the Lord more. Let us go on following the Lord, loving the Lord more than anything in our lives. I believe that when the center of our hearts truly goes forward loving the Lord, the Lord supplies everything we need and accomplishes through us all the purposes that please the Lord. When one who loves has a wish in his heart, would not the One who loves him fulfill that wish of his heart?

In the Song of Solomon there is the story of the Shulamite woman who followed after the shepherd boy she loved in her heart across the distant fields. To her, who had come over mountains and across waters, her beloved says, *"The winter is past, The rain is over and gone" (Song of Solomon 2:11)* and *"Rise up, my love, my fair one, And come away!" (Song of Solomon 2:13)*. Would the Lord not grant that wish of the heart? If we go forward loving the Lord and regarding Him as more precious than anything in this world, our Lord grants and answers all the wishes of our hearts. That heart that loves the Lord is precisely a blessed heart, and that is precisely a blessing to us. Even if we forget everything else, we must not forget the heart that loves the Lord. We must live loving the Lord. At times we must live examining our hearts as to whether we really love the Lord.

Peter, who stretched out his hands and went where he did not wish

Our Lord said to Simon Peter the third time, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:17)*, and when Peter, grieved, said, *"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17)*, He

said, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*. And He went on to say, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish" (John 21:18)*. When Peter was old, he stretched out his hands. He could not help leading all people before that Jesus Christ who had accepted all his faults, had had all his faults and sins transferred to Him once and for all in the Jordan River with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again. So Peter stretched out his hands and led all people before Jesus Christ.

In the age of tribulation in the days of the early Church, the emperors of Rome killed and persecuted the saints and tried to seize and kill the leaders. According to the story that has been handed down, when they tried to seize Peter, he began to flee secretly, and at that time the Lord appeared, and Peter asked, "Lord, where are You going?" The Lord said, "To My flock, which you have forsaken; if you do not go there, I must go for My flock." Then Peter said, "How can You go, Lord? You died once on the Cross, so why would You go again to that place where the persecution is severe? I will go." As one who had received the love of the Lord, Peter knew that if he went there, he would certainly be seized by the Roman soldiers and die. Even so, he said, "Lord, do not go; I will go instead," and he went there and encouraged those who believed in God, telling them not to be afraid, that even if we die at their hands, we go to the kingdom of heaven, and exhorted them with the word *"do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matthew 10:28)*. And he gave himself up to the Roman soldiers, and when they were about to nail him to a cross and kill him, it is said that he said, "Our Lord died nailed to the Cross, so how could I presumptuously die in the same way as Jesus? Hang me

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upside down on the cross and nail me." We can truly see Peter, who had received grace before the Lord. Peter had received that love before God. Because he had truly received the remission of all his sins, because all those faults of being hot-tempered and quick to curse had been remitted, because he had received love through our Lord, the life of Peter could be adorned like that at the end, and he could stretch out his hands toward many people. He went the way in which another girded him and carried him where he did not wish.

When we serve the Lord, we suffer difficulties in many areas. When we serve the Lord, we do not do only what we like. At times we have to go even when we do not want to go, and there are times when we have to go to painful places. There are times when we do what we do not want to do, and times when we do what we do not wish. As we serve the Lord in the Church, there are times when we give up what the flesh wants, what the flesh likes. There are times when it is offered before our Lord and used for the gospel. But that is a very small thing. The servants of God and those who love the Lord do not go about as they please, wherever they want. It means that there are times when they go where they do not wish, even though they do not like it, and there are many times when they go there and serve the Lord. When our Lord entrusts you with what you dislike, can you answer, "Yes"? If you have received the love of the Lord, you can say, "Yes," and obey and do it. Even if it does not suit your heart, you can say, "Yes." Peter stretched out his hands before our Lord and led many people to Jesus Christ.

We are those who have received the love of Jesus Christ. The heart that loves the Lord, which says, "You know that I love You more than these," is in our hearts. I want you not to forget it. When you meet some situation, I want you to sense the Holy Spirit, who is in our hearts, stirring up the heart that loves the

Lord—whether I really love the Lord more than this—and to say "Amen" together with that heart. I want you to obey as the Lord is pleased and go on following the Lord, saying, "Yes, it is so; I love the Lord. Lord, what should I do in this situation?" When you do so, I believe that the Lord will be pleased, will fulfill all the wishes of your hearts, and that through you many souls will receive the remission of sins, that through us many souls will enter the kingdom of God, and that the will of God will be done on this earth. The Lord works through those who love the Lord.

We are the servants of God and the workers of God. We are not just ordinary saints. We are those who follow the Lord as the workers of God. All the brothers and sisters in this church are those who have received the love of the Lord and those who serve the Lord. There are times when the work of serving the church is hard. Serving the church while staying up all night in foul weather is no ordinary thing, but if one truly loves the Lord, even though all of it is truly hard, in one's heart it is, "Thank You." It is, "If people receive the remission of sins through my doing this, then truly, Lord, thank You; I praise our Lord, who saved me and uses me in this righteous work." It is, "Lord, I love You more than this workplace; I love You more than these people; if it is Your will, please lead me and use me."

Dear fellow believers, we give thanks that our Lord has clothed us with such love. We give thanks and glory to our Lord, who leads us so that we can follow the Lord not by compulsion but by faith in the Lord. There are retreats and meetings, and there are times when our bodies are tired and times when things are hard in many ways. But let us follow the Lord, loving our Lord more than anything in this world. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Let us go forward pursuing righteousness

< John 21:15-18 >

"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.'"

Peter, who sinned and was in anguish

There will be no one who has not sinned like Peter and been in anguish. Peter was one who met the Lord and, being with Him for three years, came to know who Jesus Christ is, and who truly made the confession of faith by faith, in a state of having received realization through the Holy Spirit and not through his

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own will or knowledge. Peter knew who Jesus was, being with Him for three years, but at the very end, when Jesus was nailed to the Cross and died, he followed behind Him and ended up committing the sin of denying Jesus three times. After committing that sin, he was so ashamed and embarrassed, and having no face, even though he truly loved the Lord and believed in the Lord, there was even a time when he went fishing, following his old occupation.

All of us live committing such sins like Peter. There is no one who does not commit such sins. Although we do not want to, we will all have had the experience of following the flesh and not pursuing the righteousness of God, and so sinning and being in a shameful place. Nevertheless, the reason Peter, though he was once like that, turned back and became a great servant of God who truly fed and tended the sheep of the Lord is that the Lord had removed all those sins of Peter. Because the Lord had had all those sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, rose again, and saved him as one without sin, Peter became a precious worker of God, a precious servant. It seems that Peter was the only disciple who had as much hot blood as Peter, as little wickedness in his heart as Peter, was as hot-blooded as Peter, and followed the Lord revealing what was inside him as openly as Peter. The other disciples seem to have been a little more introverted, but Peter was extremely hot-blooded. We can see that, being hot-blooded, he readily got angry, readily made resolutions, readily sinned right away, and readily turned back, too. It is not only Peter who is like that; all of us are like that. Anyone at all always commits sins like those Peter committed.

The Bible says, *"There is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin" (Ecclesiastes 7:20)*, and in the Book of Romans it also says, *"There is none righteous, no, not one"*

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(Romans 3:10). It means that there is actually not a single righteous person who does not sin. The Bible also says that the wicked are *"like the chaff which the wind drives away" (Psalm 1:4)*, and that all are those who sin, while on the other hand the Lord says that He *"did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17)* the law. Because the Bible is the truth, it speaks in this way, from one extreme to the other. So those who do not know the Bible well and those who do not yet have faith cannot make head or tail of it at all. There are cases where they stay at the level that can be understood by their own thinking, and when content comes up that they cannot understand, they simply skip it, and later they lose interest in the Bible. But being lacking every day and being weak every day is what human life originally is. Our life is very lacking and weak, as Peter was. But while seeming weak, it also has an extremely strong side. When one believes in the righteousness of God and does the work of God, there is an extremely strong and tough side, and on the other hand there is also an extremely weak side. That is why the Bible describes a human being as an earthen vessel made by the potter. Because it is made of clay, there is an extremely weak part and it breaks easily, but the soul, the thoughts, and the faith that are inside it are also extremely strong.

The Lord came looking for Peter, who was weak like this, after He rose again. This word is the scene where He came looking for the disciples, met them, and conversed with them. While telling you that our brothers and sisters and ministers, all of us, that is, the righteous who have received the remission of sins, all have weak parts, I want to share the word centering on the word our Lord spoke to Peter and on the confession of Peter.

Our sins, which the Lord has already solved completely

If the Lord had not remitted all the sins that you and I commit every day in this world, if the sins we commit were not sins that the Lord had already removed completely, what would become of us? I want to ask whether you have ever thought about what would become of our spirits and souls. Living in this world, we sin every day and are lacking, but the Lord already solved completely, about two thousand years ago, the sins that you and I commit. It means that when He received baptism from John, He had all those sins transferred to Him and fulfilled all righteousness, and on the Cross He received the judgment for all the sins and rose again, and so solved all our sins completely.

If the Lord had not solved all our sins completely, what would become of you and me, sinning every day? We would become hypocritical believers. We would become the kind of people of faith who sin every day, come to church every day and offer prayers of repentance, saying, "Lord, I have done wrong; please forgive me," and then fall into skepticism by themselves, since it has no end however much they do it every day, and knowing anyway that they will do the same again tomorrow, wonder with what face they are doing this again, and fall into skepticism, so that their faith withers. The Lord has solved all the sins of you and me. That is why you and I, though lacking, truly believe in the Lord. If they were not sins the Lord had already solved completely, you and I would be troubled in heart, our consciences would become corrupt, and we would not be able to live a life of faith.

That the Lord has solved all the sins completely—this is a great thing, and that the Lord has solved all the sins of this world completely is precisely the righteousness of God. It is the

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rightness of God. Human beings are evil, but God is gracious. It means that God, knowing in advance what would become of us human beings and what sins we would commit, removed all those sins. That is the righteousness of God, and the love God has given us. That is why we, mankind, believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and obtain salvation through faith. When we believe in Jesus in order to have our sin problem solved, seek the truth, and go into it, arguing over doctrines, we see that if the Lord had not already solved completely all the sin of us, mankind, that is, all the sins that you and I commit every day all our lives, this matter of receiving the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ would not be solved.

If that is the case, it means that one later becomes buried in religion and falls into the religious thinking that this, too, like believing in another religion, is a matter of washing away sins every day and sinning every day, and so one has to attain liberation, accumulate merit, work hard, live a monastic life, live piously, and by doing so, as a result, believe well and go to heaven. But our God has already solved all our sins completely. It means that because He solved all the sins completely, by knowing and engraving on our hearts and believing in that righteousness of God, by which God solved all our sins completely, we have become those who can live a new life, like people who have no sin at all, like people who have never once sinned. This is precisely the righteousness of God, and this is precisely the salvation by which God has saved us. That is why there is a difference between human righteousness and the righteousness of God.

The Bible says, *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)*, and says, *"The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*. It means that all had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, but through our

Lord Jesus Christ we have reached that glory which God gives. It means that because God had already solved all our sins completely, by believing in that righteousness of God we have received salvation and become righteous. It means that because we have become righteous, even though we are lacking, we come to live anew at any time, anew every day. That is precisely the love with which our Lord has saved you and me, the salvation of the Lord, and the righteousness of the Lord.

Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life

This righteousness of God is a great thing. A certain Buddhist monk said, "Only when there is the Way can one attain enlightenment," and even published such a book. He meant, there is no way to go to the kingdom of heaven, there is no way to receive the remission of sins, so how can one go that way? He said that because he knew that there is no Way within his religion. The one who founded that religion said that as long as one has the flesh, one sins at any time, so one must escape from the flesh, and that for the soul to become free without sinning, only by escaping from the body can one become a soul that does not sin. But as to whether one does not sin once one escapes from the body, even he did not know the fact that one is already one who has sinned forever. It is right that he said that as long as one has the body, one always lives bound by the sinful desires of the five desires and seven emotions, but there is no way there.

But Jesus Christ says this: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. It means that the Lord is the way and the truth, that He is the way to go to the kingdom of heaven, the way by which one can believe and receive the remission of sins, and that the work the

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Lord did when He came to this earth is the true truth and life. He said that if one believes in the Lord, one comes to meet the way by which one can receive the remission of sins, comes to meet the truth, and can obtain eternal life, the new life by which one can be born again. The Book of Romans also says, *"Now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed" (Romans 3:21)*. It means that Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God.

"The righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed" (Romans 3:21), that is, it means that Jesus Christ came to this earth and removed all the sins of you and me. It means that because He has already solved them completely, by believing in what Jesus accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit when He came to this earth, that is, that He had our sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, shedding His blood, and rose again, and so saved us from all sins, we are saved from all sins and have them solved. It means that we become sinless, saved from all sins. Those who believe in Jesus must know and believe this righteousness of God.

Human righteousness and the righteousness of God

Those who believe in Jesus must discern well between the righteousness of God and human righteousness. It means that even a born-again person, if he cannot discern between human righteousness and the righteousness of God, keeps getting bound by human weakness, and, bound by his own weakness, everything goes into that weakness, and he comes to be led by Satan the devil. We have received salvation and obtained eternal life by the righteousness of God, through faith. We have not received salvation by human righteousness. We must distinguish

well between human righteousness and the righteousness of God. The Bible says, *"All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6)*. It means that human righteousness is nothing.

Human righteousness is very filthy. But the righteousness of God never changes and is forever perfect, and it has solved our sins completely. Human righteousness simply collapses when one lives a little well and then sins, and when one goes on living and sins again, everything one has done in the meantime becomes null and void. Human righteousness is like a rag, like a filthy rag. It means that it is useless. That is why we must discern well between human righteousness and the righteousness of God. Human goodness and human sin are like a filthy rag. It means that even though it is always patched, always rewoven, and always made new, it is still reduced in the end to something useless. This is precisely human righteousness. It means that however hard a human being strives in the flesh, however good a life he lives, however diligently he does something of this world that is not serving the righteousness of God, lives kindly, lives a monastic life, and makes every effort, it does not work. It means that in the end it becomes worn and worn until it cannot be used even as a filthy rag, and finally it goes into the trash can.

Because in my childhood I wore many hand-me-downs and patched clothes, and I saw that what had become tattered and could no longer serve as clothing ended up becoming a rag and being thrown away, I understand well the saying that human righteousness is like a rag. These days, when a towel one has been wiping one's face with gets a little worn, it is used right away as a rag, but the real concept of a rag is not that. A real rag is something that has been used and used until at last it can no longer be used, and just before it is thrown away, just before it goes into the trash can, it is put on the floor and used for wiping. However much human righteousness is built up, however much

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one tries not to sin, and however much one offers prayers of repentance every day after sinning and does good deeds, it does not work. It means that it is not sufficient for entering the kingdom of God. However hard the people of this world try, even people like sages, or scholars, or eminent people, though it seems they ought to have more dignity as they grow older, once they pass their prime, their strength runs out and in the end they become a scrap of rag. We must discern well between human righteousness and the righteousness of God. In fact, Peter's sinning, too, was that he tried to do it by human righteousness, by his own resolution, saying that he would follow the Lord even to death, but he could not keep his own righteousness. He sinned again, went fishing again, and did useless things again, too.

We, too, must not try to follow the Lord by our own strength. If one strives to follow by one's own strength, it works up to a certain point, but when one goes a little further and crosses the limit, one surrenders and collapses, and then one takes heart again and makes a resolution and follows, and when one crosses the limit of one's strength, one gives up again. It is so if one follows by one's own will. We must forsake human righteousness, forsake our own will, believe by faith that God has solved all our sins completely, give thanks, exalt the righteousness of God, boast of the righteousness of God, and pursue it by faith. It means that by knowing this and by faith—that God has made me whole, that He has solved all my sin problems completely, that though I am this lacking, He has solved this, too, completely—by meditating on this in our hearts and by faith, we come to follow God. It means that we come to follow God and draw near to God, and, keeping the righteousness of God in our hearts, we come to serve that righteousness of God by faith and to preach the righteousness of God.

Therefore, it means that those who have received the remission of sins must, in their life of faith, discern well between human righteousness and the righteousness of God, and, not trying to follow the Lord by their own strength, must serve God by faith in the fact that the righteousness of God has solved all the sin problems of you and me, and by faith in the word of the Lord, who said, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33),* must serve the work of the Lord, the work God is pleased with, the work of preaching the righteousness of God. It means that by serving that, we come to follow the Lord. It means that you and I must not follow the Lord by an act of will, saying, "I have received the remission of sins, so I must follow the Lord." It is because when one reaches the limit, one is bound to fall. We are those who have obtained the righteousness of God through faith. God has solved all our sin problems completely. Do you believe it? Do you have sin, or not? God, by the righteousness of God, by the rightness of God, because God loved us, has solved our sin problems completely. By believing that, we receive the remission of all sins, become new people at any time, become born-again people at any time, and become people without sin at any time, and by serving the righteousness of God we become the servants of righteousness and come to follow God.

When we keep the righteousness of God in our hearts and believe in it, and exalt, boast of, and serve the righteousness of God, we become people of faith, people who please God, people who receive the power of God, and people who receive the blessing of God. It means that a person who cannot help serving sin and cannot help only sinning, a person who is weak and cannot help stumbling and falling, becomes a strong person and a precious worker of God. So we must think clearly about the righteousness of God. It says of the blessed man, *"In His law he*

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meditates day and night" (Psalm 1:2), and it means that he always meditates on the fact that the righteousness of God has saved him completely. It means that even while doing other things, and even while walking down the street and watching people, there is still in our hearts, in our souls, the faith that holds on to and believes in the righteousness of God. When we live by such faith, we can serve the God of righteousness, follow Him, receive blessings, and become the servants of righteousness. In our following the Lord, there is nothing but that. The reason we can follow and serve the Lord is that there is the righteousness of God and that we believe in the righteousness of God.

The righteousness of God came first

Peter, together with the disciples, cast the net all night long, but no fish were caught. But when the pitch-dark dawn was growing a little brighter, the voice of Jesus was heard from the shore. *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some" (John 21:6)*. At first Peter must have thought, "I grew up doing this here and lived as a fisherman for a long time, so what difference does it make whether I cast the net on the right side or the left side?" but because there had been no gain all night long, he heard that voice and tried casting it. As soon as he cast the net and pulled it, it was so heavy that his back ached. Wondering whether it had perhaps caught on a rock, he pulled, and it came up, and when he dragged it up, the net was full of fish. Wondering who on earth could be the One who could say such a thing, he looked, and it was Jesus. When John said that it was the Lord, Peter, who had taken off his clothes, put them back on and swam out. When he met Him like that and came out to the shore, the Lord had grilled fish, and He gave them breakfast

and they ate together. And He spoke to Peter. *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. When Peter said, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, the Lord said, *"Feed My lambs" (John 21:15)*. When He said the second time, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, he said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, and He said, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*. When He said the third time, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:17)*, because He asked so the third time, Peter was grieved and said, *"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17)*, and Jesus said, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*.

The question here is which came first. When He said, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, Peter said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, and these words are a matter of whether the righteousness of God came first or human righteousness came first. Did Peter love Jesus first? Or was it that, although Peter had betrayed the Lord and, trying to follow the Lord by an act of will, had fallen again, so that his human righteousness had become a filthy rag, Jesus loved Peter first and solved his sin problem completely, and that is why Peter said that he loved Jesus? When we look at which came first, the righteousness of God or human righteousness, it means that the righteousness of God came first. Jesus came to this earth to save Peter, had all the sins Peter would commit all his life transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, bore the sin of the world and went to the Cross and died nailed to it, and rose again from death. And when He came looking for him again now and asked, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, that Peter said, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, means that Peter knew the righteousness of God.

It means that Peter knew and believed that God had loved him. That is why Peter said three times in a row, *"You know that*

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I love You" (John 21:15). It was to say, "When the Lord has solved all my sin problems completely, how could I not love the Lord?" The Lord had loved Peter like this and had solved all the sin problems of Peter, and He was now asking whether he knew that. Peter could not help saying those words. It is, "When the Lord has solved all my sins, saved me completely, and removed them all, how could I not love the Lord?"

Is there anything else in our believing in and following the Lord? Because God has solved our sin problem, because there is the righteousness of God, because we have received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of God, we love the Lord and follow the Lord; if the Lord had not first solved our sin problem, how could we, who sin every day, believe in the Lord, how could we receive salvation, and how could we say that we love the Lord more than these? A person who has received much love loves much. Children who received much love when they were young know how to love, whether people or animals, when they grow up. But children who grew up without receiving much love are stingy with love. If one has not received love, one cannot see from the viewpoint of love. That may be so in the flesh, but God said that He does not forsake us.

A person may forsake his parents or children depending on his circumstances, but God said, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5)*. Because God loved us, He solved all our sin problems completely. A person who believes this cannot leave God. Because he has received much love, and that love is actually still valid at present, he can never leave. *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, and then the Lord said three times, *"Feed My lambs" (John 21:15)*, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*, and *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*, and one who has received this love cannot help doing the work of God. It means

that a person who knows the righteousness of God and believes in the righteousness of God cannot help doing the work of God.

Let us forsake human righteousness and go forward pursuing the righteousness of God

We have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus. How much did Jesus love you? He loved you to the end, and He removed all the sins you commit all your lives. He had the sins you commit transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, and, bearing the sin of the world once and for all, He received in His own body on the Cross all the punishment for all sins. *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*. It means that He solved completely even the sins we commit every day, all those sins. Because we believe in such love, because we have believed in and received such remission of sins, such righteousness of God, we love and believe in the Lord. That is how we have received salvation. But it means that although we have received salvation by believing in the righteousness of God, we must still not try to follow the Lord by human will. It means that we must still hold on to the righteousness of God, and since we have received salvation by believing in the righteousness of God, we must still boast of, serve, and preach to others that righteousness of God. Only then do we become right disciples of Jesus Christ before God.

If Jesus came to you and me now and said, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, the Lord knows that our hearts truly love the Lord more. We, too, would confess so. If the Lord said again, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, we would say again, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*. If He asked,

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“Do you love Me?” (John 21:17), we could not help answering, “Lord, You know all things.” I believe that the Lord knows everything—that I sin, that I am weak, that I love the Lord, that I believe in the righteousness of God, but that I am lacking. Nevertheless, we cannot help saying, “I love You, Lord; You know all things.” Today, too, by believing in the righteousness of God, we love the Lord, and having become those who have no sin, still like newborn babies, those who have been completely saved from sin, we follow the Lord today, too. We serve the Lord, serve the righteousness of God, and preach the righteousness of God to all the nations of the whole world.

That is why you and I must forsake human righteousness. We must forsake our own will and resolutions. Even a person whose body is weak works, but if one tries to serve the Lord by one’s own righteousness and one’s own will, one cannot when one runs into the limit of one’s strength. But if one believes in the righteousness of God, one leaps over the limit of human weakness. Leaping over it once, leaping over it twice, leaping over it three times, and later one becomes an athlete in the hurdles, like one who jumps over hurdles while running. We must leap over all the difficult adversities by believing in the righteousness of God, by boasting of the righteousness of God, and by being clothed with power before God, and preach the righteousness of God to the end so that all the people of the world may know it. Let us not pursue our own righteousness, but think of, believe in, and follow the righteousness of God. God has made us whole. We praise that God, who gave us the righteousness of God, solved all our sin problems, made us righteous and sinless, made us serve God, made us preach it to all the nations of the whole world, and saved us so that we can live for that righteousness, and gave us eternal life. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

We must fully know and believe in the righteousness of God

< John 21:15-18 >

"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.'"

The confession of Peter, which came out because the Lord loved him first

This word is the word Jesus spoke when He went looking for the disciples after He rose again. When Jesus rose again from

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death and came looking for the disciples, Peter and the disciples were catching fish at night. Jesus said, *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat" (John 21:6)*, and the disciples did as He told them and caught one hundred and fifty-three large fish. As the disciples were coming out of the boat, Jesus was grilling fish on the shore. After having the disciples eat breakfast like that, Jesus called Peter. He asked three times, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, and Peter answered, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. So the Lord said, *"Feed My lambs" (John 21:15)* and *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*, and the third time, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*. When He asked the same question the third time, Peter, grieved, said, *"Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (John 21:17)*—as if to say, do You not know everything? This word is a word we all know.

Why did Peter say, "I love You more than these"? He said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*—as if to say, why do You keep asking, when You know everything about me? The Lord was asking whether he loved Him more than these, more than his companions, more than all people—whether he loved Jesus Himself. Jesus wanted to hear that answer, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, and He said three times, feed the sheep, tend them, feed them. Why could Peter not help saying the same thing three times? It was because it was not that Peter loved the Lord first, but that the Lord loved Peter. Because the Lord loved Peter so much that Peter could not help loving the Lord, Peter could not help saying three times, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*. A person who has received much of the love of the Lord, a person who knows much of the righteousness of the Lord, a person who knows much of the love of the Lord, cannot help saying so. Because the Lord's loving Peter was greater than Peter's wrongdoing, he could not help speaking like this. I think

that today we, too, are the same. We cannot betray the Lord, and we cannot help loving the Lord. It is because the Lord's loving us is so great.

What is the righteousness of God?

These days the world is in an uproar over the affair of a certain church leader. They run the leader's business with the offerings of the church members, and say that taking part in that business is worship, prayer, and loyalty offered to the Lord. That leader neither serves nor preaches the gospel and aims only at his own business. Even so, the church members bring their offerings wrapped up and hand them over. In such places, once the offerings come in, there is no such thing as a financial report. Once the offerings come in, that is the end, and there is nothing about how much came in and where it was spent. Offerings ought, through the accounts, to be spent on the spread of the gospel and the running of the church as the church discusses.

If such groups were to be classified by denomination, they could be called Evangelicalism. Saying that if one believes in Jesus one has no sin is Evangelicalism. The various denominations that claim to be orthodox today could be called Reformed theology. The denominations that say that if our own faith is wrong, as the Bible says, they will somehow correct it and believe and live a life of faith according to the word are called Reformed. Another group is Charismaticism, which says things that make no sense, offers prayer with the laying on of hands as in a shamanic rite, and tells sicknesses to be healed. Christianity can be divided into these three groups—Evangelicalism, Reformed theology, and Charismaticism—and the question is whether they know the righteousness of God. The

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question is whether they know the righteousness of God, whether they believe in it, and whether they preach it. They do not know the righteousness of God, they do not believe in it, and they do not preach it.

Then what is the righteousness of God? In our language, the word 'ui' in the phrase 'the righteousness of God' is written with the Chinese character 義, which means 'right,' and the right act that God did in order to remove our sins—this is the righteousness of God. You, too, have things you do well and things worth putting forward and boasting of, and that is called putting forward one's own righteousness, putting forward one's own rightness. Boasting that in this field at least I do better than others, or that I live such a good life, is also called righteousness. When we look at ourselves as individuals, too, there are things we do especially well and things we have done well in our actions, and we call those right deeds, and God, too, has done a right thing toward us. That is the righteousness of God.

The righteousness of God is that God so loved us that He forsook His throne of glory and put on human flesh and came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and had all the sin of us human beings transferred to His own body once and for all, bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross and died in place of us human beings, and died and rose again and saved us. The best thing God has done for us, that is the righteousness of God, and God wants to boast of it to us. God also wants us to believe in that work by which He removed our sins for us, and He wants us to believe and obtain salvation and live happily. It means that God says to us human beings at any time, "Have I not saved you? Have I not loved you? Have I not done this in order to remove your sins? This is the right thing and the right deed I did for you; I have loved you like this."

This is what God boasts of toward us human beings. It means

that God has something to boast of to us. It means, "I am not just God, but the God of love, and truly, to save you, I sent My Son, and My Son, who is your God, had your sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, died in your place, and died and came back to life in order to save you from sin, and so saved you; I determined and planned to do this work in consultation with My Son and the Holy Spirit, and I put what I had planned into practice and saved you." God boasts of this and wants us to believe it.

Those who believe only in the blood of the Cross

But today many churches and mission organizations, that is, the Evangelicals, believe in Jesus but believe only in the blood of the Cross. And they say that they have no sin. The question is whether they really know the righteousness of God. They do not know the righteousness of God. So even when they preach the gospel, they cannot preach the whole righteousness of God. If they had known the righteousness of God, and had known and believed in the right deed God did for us, that deed of love, they could not do that. They could not run only their own business with the offerings, and could not abandon other people in a time of emergency and get out alone. We must not do that, and we cannot do that either. As to whether the Reformed, or the Charismatics, or the Evangelicals know the righteousness of God, believe in it, and preach it, it means that they do not know it, do not believe in it, and do not preach it.

God speaks to you and me about the righteousness of God. It means, "I have done this right deed for you; in order to remove your sins, I put on human flesh and came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and had all sins transferred to Me

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once and for all, was hung on the Cross and died, shedding My blood, in your place, and died and rose again and did the work of saving you." It means that this is the thing God can most put forward toward us and the thing most worth boasting of. God did that work, and because He wanted to show it to us, He showed it in the Bible. And He wants us to believe this and wants us to preach it. But today the Evangelicals, the Reformed, and the Charismatics do not know this. That is why they always hold on only to the Cross and say that they believe like this, and think that if they believe only that, they are saved.

If you did something truly right for someone, whether for the Lord or for a person, and he did not fully acknowledge it but acknowledged only half of it, would you not feel hurt? If he said that he could not believe everything you said and acknowledged only half, would you not be offended? God, too, loved all mankind and, in order to save all mankind from sin, put on human flesh and came to this earth, was born for us, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us; if one left out all the earlier things and remembered and acknowledged only that He shed His blood on the Cross, would He not be hurt? The righteousness of God appears many times in the Bible. In particular, in the Book of Romans, written by the Apostle Paul, human righteousness and the righteousness of God, human rightness and the rightness of God, appear many times. The Bible also says that human rightness is *"like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6)*. It means that when we believe in Jesus as our Savior, the things God did for us all include His being born as a human being and coming, His receiving baptism from John and having our sins transferred to Him, His being hung on the Cross and receiving the judgment for our sins, His taking our death in our

place, and His rising again in order to bring us back to life. But if one remembers, believes in, and acknowledges only that one thing, His being hung on the Cross, and preaches only that, how would His heart be? Whatever His heart may be, the question is whether salvation would come by believing like that.

The devil, who comes between God and us

When we believe in Jesus, there is not only the relationship between us and God. Here there is a disrupter. We call it the devil. God, by the right deed of God, loved us, had our sins transferred to Him and removed them, received the judgment, and brought us back to life from death; He did that work for us, and preached it to us through the servants who have gone ahead and through the word of the Bible. We must believe that fact. When we believe that fact, we receive the remission of sins. But it means that if we do not concretely, fully, and once and for all believe that He is God, that He received baptism from John in order to have our sins transferred to Him, that He was hung on the Cross, and that He rose again and saved us like this, the devil deceives us every time we sin, saying, "Have you not sinned?" What happens if we do not believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and believe only in the blood of the Cross? Even if one believes only in the blood of Jesus, it seems that salvation has come. For a while one feels good and it seems that one's sins are gone. But every time one sins as one lives, one cannot solve that sin problem with the blood of the Cross alone. One can say a few times, "Lord, thank You for shedding Your blood for me; I believe in You," but one cannot keep on doing it. Though one can rationalize by oneself a few times and believe in the love of the Lord, saying, "I keep committing the same sin; Lord, please

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forgive me; Jesus, who went to the Cross, died for me, and yet I have done this again; I believe that the Lord will forgive me," if one commits the same sin dozens of times in a row and keeps on committing it as one goes on living, it means that later one ends up saying to oneself, "With what face could I go before God?" That is why people say, "I have a conscience, after all." And the devil comes between us and God and sows discord. He says, "Do you have no sin? Is there not sin in your heart?"

We must know clearly. If one believes in Jesus without knowing the righteousness of God, one always has sin. For a while it seems that one's sins are gone, but when one sins again, sin remains in one's heart. Only when one knows and believes in the righteousness of God does sin disappear from one's heart, and it disappears because He has fully removed our sins. When we believe that, the right deed He did for us has its effect on us. It is because God has promised. If one does not fully know and believe in the righteousness of God, sin does not disappear. Also, as we live, because human beings are weak, we do wrong like Peter, and when I have sinned and the devil seizes the opportunity in between and says, "How can a person like you say that you have no sin?"—if we do not know and believe in the fact that all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism Jesus received and in the blood of the Cross as one bundle, as one, it means that we cannot help submitting to the words of the devil without fail. And it means that God cannot give salvation to the believing of a person who does not know the truth, a person who does not know the righteousness of God, who just believes in Jesus as if doing Him a favor. The Lord said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*, and Pilate, questioning Jesus, asked, *"What is truth?" (John 18:38)*. Truth means what is true, and it means that the Lord has truly removed the sins of you and me. But if we do not

know this true righteousness of God, this true love of God, this true rightness of God—that Jesus came to this earth and removed our sins with the baptism and the Cross—if we do not know what is true and know only half of it or know it vaguely, we come to believe vaguely, and our sins, too, disappear only vaguely.

The fruit of one who knows and believes in the righteousness of God

I am telling you this not because you do not know the righteousness of God, but so that we may think about whether the people of today—the Evangelicals, the Reformed, and the Charismatics—know and believe in the righteousness of God, and whether they preach the righteousness of God. They do not know the righteousness of God. When we speak to them of the righteousness of God, they reject it. Saying that it is enough to believe only in the blood of the Cross, so why must one believe in the baptism, they not only do not believe in the righteousness of God but reject it. Because they reject the righteousness of God, they do not preach it either. They are those who do not believe in the righteousness of God, and you and I are those who know and believe in the righteousness of God. That is why the fruit of faith is different. It means that if one believes what is true, the Holy Spirit comes upon one's heart, and that Holy Spirit leads us and makes us bear true fruit, good fruit, and if one does not know what is true and just believes in Jesus vaguely, the truth is not in one and there is no Holy Spirit, and so one comes to bear evil fruit. That is why such a thing has broken out today, and why they are living such a life of faith. The Lord said, *"Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit" (Matthew 7:17).*

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You and I, though lacking, are those who know and believe in the righteousness of God, who cannot help loving the Lord, like Peter. That is why it means that if we are lacking, we are lacking, that is all; when the Lord has removed our sins with the water and the blood, there cannot possibly be sin in us, and we have become such people who cannot help loving the Lord even if we tried not to love Him. So when someone believes in Jesus, whether he believes knowing the righteousness of God or believes without knowing it makes an enormous difference in the result. It means that one may believe in Jesus and yet become a sinner who goes to hell and one who does evil deeds, or one may believe in Jesus and, though lacking, because one knew and believed in the righteousness of God, become a person who cannot help saying, like Peter, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*—You know that I love You more than these. So when we look at any denomination or group, those who believe in the blood of the Cross of Jesus and say that they have no sin are the Evangelicals, and the denominations that claim to be orthodox today are the Reformed, but we must know that they, and the Charismatics, too, all do not accept the righteousness of God. That is, we must know that the righteousness of God is not in their hearts, and that they do not believe in it. Believing in Jesus is better than not believing, but what matters is whether one knows and believes in the righteousness of God properly, whether one knows and believes in the fact that God truly loved you and me and removed our sins concretely like this. Believing roughly, without that, saying, "You were hung on the Cross and died in our place, how pitiful; how much it must have hurt; I will believe in You as a favor," is something God is not pleased with. We must know that God is not a God who is pleased to receive pity.

Is it only those people who have set the world in an uproar?

All the Evangelicals who believe only in the blood of the Cross and say that they have no sin are like that. Such people tell lies as routinely as they eat their meals and still feel no shame. Because they believe that they are saved and going to heaven, they say that they unconditionally have no sin. When we speak of the gospel like this, they reject us. Among them there are also those who speak of the baptism Jesus received, but ultimately they do not believe in it. Looking at such people who have set the world in an uproar, I think about why they have become like that. They are those who from the beginning do not know about the righteousness of God and do not believe in it. That is why they have nothing of the righteousness of God to preach, no duty to preach it, and cannot preach it even if they want to. When they neither know it, nor believe in it, nor accept it, what is there to preach? They can do nothing but run their own business, extort money, and harm people. So we must know clearly. When someone says that he believes in Jesus, we must see whether this person believes knowing the righteousness of God or believes without knowing it. If he knows the righteousness of God and really believes in it in his heart, that person has really received salvation and goes to heaven. If he believes in Jesus without knowing the righteousness of God, just believing in the blood of the Cross, he is a religious person. He is exactly the same as the believers of other religions. In that person's heart there is clearly sin, and he does not bear good fruit. He believes in Jesus, all right, but he bears very vicious fruit.

When one believes in Jesus, one can believe as one pleases, but if one believes knowing wrongly, one ruins one's life. If one believes in Jesus without knowing the righteousness of God, one becomes like those people. Then could we do that? If we were in that place, what would we do? Would we say that it is enough for us alone to live, leaving the others to die or not, or would we

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say that even if we all die together, we will save even one more person? It is the latter. At the very least, people have a conscience. The righteous can never do that. They have a heart of compassion, and even in wrath they have a heart of compassion. But those people who set the world in an uproar could not do that. It is a truly regrettable thing, and all those who believe in Jesus were put to shame. Then is it only they? The denominations that are originally called orthodox are all like that, too. Are the people of the world not pointing the finger at them? Do they preach the gospel? Even if they build their church buildings large, do they preach the gospel? One must know it in order to preach the gospel. If they preach the gospel they know, it all goes into the trash, and even if one believes it, there is no salvation. Is there salvation if one believes only in Jesus who was hung on the Cross? Sins do not disappear. One is free to believe as one wishes, but even if one died and came back, sins would not disappear. To receive the remission of sins, one must believe in Jesus, who came by the water, the blood, and the Spirit, as the word says, "*This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ –ASV" (1 John 5:6)*. It is because that is the righteousness of God. It is because that is the rightness of God.

In the life of faith, it is not only the relationship between a person and God that matters. In between there is the devil. When the devil pounces to deceive you, a person who does not know the righteousness of God is deceived every time. That is why we must keep our wits about us, and above all, we cannot express how thankful we are that we know and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit until now, and we will keep on preaching it so that all the people of the whole world may know it. We truly give thanks. But how did those people come to be like that? Did God only die for us? Because they believe so, the fruit turns out

like that. That is not believing but mocking God. There is no need to speak ill of others; let us ourselves do well. We give thanks to the Lord, who has made us fully know and believe in the righteousness of God and has made us live preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Do you love Me?

< John 21:15-19 >

"So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Feed My lambs.' He said to him again a second time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' He said to him, 'Tend My sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.' This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, 'Follow Me.'"

The answer given from the heart

After Jesus rose again, He asked the disciples, and Peter in particular, three times in a row, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, and Peter answered three times. But after we have believed in the Lord, when our Lord asks you and me this question, what could we answer? When we think about it, we can answer in two

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ways. When He asks, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, we can give this answer, "Yes," *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, with the head, or we can truly give it from the heart. The question is whether, when we say that we truly love Jesus, an answer that we love Him like a friend, like family, like a king is possible. If the Lord asked me this question, I could say from my heart, "I truly love You, Lord; I respect and love You with my heart; You are my God, my Savior, my shepherd, and my Master."

That the Lord asked Peter, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, was also a question asked socially. It was, you are now living a social life in the world, so how many people do you know and how many people do you like; and there, socially speaking, money is included, power is included, and affection is included. Human love, the love of friends, the love with which one loves one's own life—all these are included. He asked, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, socially as well. When Peter answered, "Yes," *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, the Lord said, *"Feed My lambs" (John 21:15)*. After we meet the Lord, the Lord often asks this kind of question. Because we are human, we are social. We are not independent. We are beings connected to one another—because you are, I am, and because I am, you are. That is why there is much love there, too. But when he said that among all of them he loved the Lord the most, He said, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*. After we are born again, we all receive this command of the Lord.

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"Feed My sheep"

At first, after we receive salvation, we lean first toward growing. Since one has to live oneself, one's faith grows little by little, and after that the Lord asks us. He says, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, do you love Me more than these, more than human relationships, more than friends, more than money, more than power, more than honor, more than your life?—and at this time we must be able to answer from the heart. When we answer from the heart, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, the Lord says, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*. What is feeding the sheep? It is raising disciples. It is caring for the flock and also caring for one's fellow workers and forming a community, and thus building the kingdom of God and seeking to live well together. In particular, leading those who are young in faith, also leading those who are weak in the flesh, finding each one a place to live, and, as they live, entrusting them with responsibilities suited to their age and letting them have security, too, are included in this. So, when He says, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, "Yes," *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*, you and I continually—those who came first caring for those who came after, and those who came after caring in turn for those who come next—care for them continually, both physically and spiritually, and prepare that place for them.

In circumstances too tight even to feed oneself, one cannot feed the sheep. To serve the Lord, one must prepare a vessel. One must prepare a vessel and pray, "Lord, my vessel has been prepared like this, so please bless it," and ask the Lord that blessing may come upon this vessel. So when we ask Him to bless us, the Lord blesses us to overflowing, and then we can look after others and preach the gospel overseas as well. That is

why feeding the sheep is extremely important. After the Lord rose again, He spoke this word to the disciples last, and a little later He said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20)*. And He went up with the promise that He *"will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11)*. He will come down in that same manner. So now we must do the work of feeding the sheep. In His asking, *"Do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, many social things are included. It would be a problem if we loved only one another, but we must know that the Lord has granted us this duty of loving the Lord the most and, receiving the command of the Lord, loving and caring for these people. Without this responsibility, we cannot say that we follow the Lord. Doing well by oneself alone is not the life of faith. Preparing each one's place so that we can all live together—when someone receives the remission of sins, nurturing his faith, but also preparing a place so that he can live—this kind of thing is feeding the sheep. Since He said, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*, it is not just studying the Bible with the word and ending there, but providing a way to make a living as well—this, too, is included.

We must know that our Lord always asked this in social and communal terms. The Lord is not One who saves only our souls and leaves us alone. It means that He wants to govern even our lives themselves, and that He wanted us to serve the Lord through our lives. So we must learn to serve the Lord through our lives. It means that through this life we need to obey the commands of the Lord, love one another, and, rather than clashing with one another, when someone has some weakness, overlook it and wait for him, and give him a place to live so that

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he can settle down rightly little by little. As soon as I met the Lord, and as soon as I began the work of the gospel together with you, I had to prepare something to live on right away. I attempted it by faith, and it is the same now. I am still continually creating gospel work in order to prepare a place for you. If we went on in the manner of saying, "We have received the remission of sins, and I believe and you believe, so that is enough," it would not be a life of faith and we could not spread the gospel either. The life of faith is believing and following while looking up to God, and one must follow in the midst of life, so could one follow with only having believed once in the heart? If you and I did not live a life of faith, a life of serving, did not feed the flock and care for one another, and did not serve the gospel, what kind of people would we have become? We would at once have become people who have dropped out in both body and spirit.

Three kinds of people

When we look quietly, there are three kinds of people in the world. The first is the person who does the work entrusted to him faithfully and also benefits others; the second is the person who does not benefit others but lives obtaining benefit by himself without holding out his hand to others; and the third is the person who lives by squeezing things out of others. It is the same after we have believed in the Lord. There are people who truly love and believe in the Lord with all their heart and all their strength, seek the benefit of the brothers and sisters, and live in order to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to souls; there are people who say, "I have received salvation, so I do not want to serve the gospel, and it is enough for me alone to live well,

whatever becomes of others"; and third, there are people who look for whether there are any weak points and aim only to give others a hard time. Such people reckon, "I am working here like this, so what comes back to me? What is there that benefits me?" They are people who reckon not only for themselves but also, looking at the other family members, "That person is working here like this, so what have these people done for that person?" This third kind of person refuses the command of the Lord. When He says, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:16)* and *"do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, he is a person who says, "No, I do not love You; I am thankful that You saved me, so let us end it with this; the accounts are all settled, and I intend to live for my own benefit on this earth." Such people have many complaints.

When He said, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, Peter answered from his heart, "Yes," *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*. If we really believe in our hearts and are for the Lord, when the Lord asks us, we come to give exactly the same answer as Peter. It is, "You know it all, so why do You ask it as if it were new?" But if one asks the third kind of person this, he says, "What do You mean? Do I not love You, Lord?" It means that he loves with the head. It means, "You saved me, so I am thankful." But it means that his heart is not so. So he tends to have thoughts like, "What does the church do for me? If I were out in the world, I would receive at least this much treatment."

Then let us examine it strictly. If one really goes out into the world and works like that, can one be treated well? Even the world does not use the third kind of person. If a person like me tried to get into a big company, I would fail right away the moment I was interviewed, on the grounds that I am stubborn and self-willed and not the obedient type. But within the world of the Lord, I am the obedient type. It means that if the Lord

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wants it, if it is the will of the Lord, I will follow anywhere. But in the world there is no reason for me to do that. Would such people of the third kind not be pushed out right away if they went out into the world? Any employer seeks the benefit of his own company, so he does not use a person who seeks only his own benefit. So he looks at how much loyalty there is and hires the person. You think that if you obtain many certificates, getting a job will go well, but that is the next issue. The work can be learned as much as one likes after entering the company. The first thing they look at is how high this person's loyalty will be when we bring him into our company, whether he is a person who will work loyally. If they judge that his loyalty is thin, however many certificates he has and however well it seems he would work, he is dropped right away.

When we have received salvation and stand before the Lord, that is what the Lord comes to us and says. When He says, *"Do you love Me?" (John 21:16)* and *"do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*, Peter, who says, "Yes," *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, is the first kind of person. He is making the confession, "When the Lord has done so much for me, how could I say that I do not know it? Because what the Lord has done for me is so much, I am a person for whom even following and serving the Lord, giving my whole life, would not be enough." So the Lord said, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)* and entrusted His sheep to him. But the third kind of person says that he loves, all right, but asks that the words "more than these" be left out, and says, "To me, You and these people are the same." People whose hearts are wrong are the third kind of people. Even if they go out into the world and do business, business does not go well with such a heart. What is a shop where business goes well like? While charging the same price, it helps the customer a little more with other things and gives him a little more benefit.

A shop that charges the same price but gives no benefit at all goes under, and a shop that benefits people does well. Even in running a business, a place that benefits people does well, and a place that does not benefit people goes under before long. People seek out a restaurant that is delicious, and a restaurant that is not delicious they may go to once, but they do not go twice. If the work we do does not benefit people, it has already failed. If we benefit people, they say, "I have obtained this benefit, so I must tell my friend, too," and introduce it, and things that seemed unlikely to work get done one by one.

One who has received much loves much

It is the same when we serve the Lord. Peter said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:15)*, and those words mean this: "What the Lord has given me is so much. If I had received a little, I would give a little, but I have received a great deal of love. The Lord not only had my sins transferred to Him with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, shedding His blood, rose again, and saved me, but He has also made me a child of God, kept me from going to hell, made me receive blessings and live well on this earth, too, made me live with my self-esteem intact, and in the end He will send me to heaven, too. When the Lord has given me so much as an extra besides salvation, how could I not love the Lord?" If what we have really received from the Lord were little, could we serve the Lord like this? Could we follow Him? If one says that one has received little, one does not serve the Lord. A loyal heart does not arise. It is so with me, to begin with. But since what I have received from the Lord is so much, however loyal I am, there is no comparison, and also, in proportion to my loyalty, my fellow workers, too, receive the

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benefit of receiving salvation, obtaining a place to live, and living well, so my heart of loyalty to the Lord cannot help growing higher. If one's body is not well, one at least gives one's heart, but the third kind of person cannot do that. A person who has received much gives out much. The Lord said, *"To whom little is forgiven, the same loves little" (Luke 7:47)*. This is the logic of the Lord.

I have received so much. You, too, have received so much. But not knowing that, you think that what you have received is salvation, only one thing. But within that salvation, just as the goose that lays golden eggs lays a golden egg every day, when one receives the salvation the Lord gives, one receives benefits inexhaustibly. At first I thought there was only one thing, salvation, but when I looked afterward, there was so much. That is why we love the Lord. The third kind of person cannot do that. A person who thinks that he has received little says that He has given just this one thing, salvation, and demands too much. That is why the person who had received one talent said to his master, *"Lord, I knew you to be a hard man" (Matthew 25:24)*, and protested that he had given him just one small thing and expected this much from him, and was he not a bad man. When he said, "You gave me one, so I buried it in the ground and dug it up and brought it; here it is, so take it," the master said, *"Take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents" (Matthew 25:28)*, and said, *"Cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness" (Matthew 25:30)*. Could you and I do that? Could we say, like the third kind of person, "You have done nothing for me, so why do You demand so much and ask for so much loyalty?" Such a person must do the accounts again. If he really insists, he should also think about what it would be like to live in the world by his own strength.

Ruling is not oppression

When the Lord asked the same question again, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" (John 21:16)*, the hot-tempered Peter said, *"You know that I love You" (John 21:16)*, as if to say, "You asked that a moment ago and I answered, so why do You ask again?" and the Lord said, *"Tend My sheep" (John 21:16)*, that is, rule over them. When feeding the sheep, one must feed them so that they grow well, but at times one must rule over them. Ruling is not ruling badly. There are some who think that oppressing is ruling, but that is oppression, not ruling. Ruling is teaching him what is right so that he can grow rightly, guiding him with what is right, making him live a right life, letting him work, too, and making sure that work is not in vain. When one grows by being ruled like that, later one becomes a person who can feed others, too, rule the sheep well, and guide them to the right place. So we must become people who can give a proper answer to the question of the Lord. One must not have the thought of squeezing things out of others, and such a person had better live his own life early on. We gain far more by following the Lord. It is not that we serve the Lord, but that the Lord serves us. In everything we do, the Lord helps us and intervenes. Later on, we come to give the answer, "I thought I loved the Lord, but it is the Lord who loves me." Anyone may have wrong thoughts when his faith is young, but it is not so when his faith matures.

The Lord asked again the third time. *"He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My sheep'" (John 21:17)*. It is, "You know everything, so why do You keep asking three times?" *"You know all things; You know that I love You" (John*

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21:17). It is not that I say that I love Him, but that since the Lord has made me one who cannot help loving the Lord, how could I not love the Lord? Being a disciple of Jesus is this kind of thing. Because the Lord has made me one who cannot but love the Lord, I live as a disciple of the Lord. Because He has made you and me so today as well, we are living by such faith. How could we say that we love the Lord? It is the Lord who loves us. The Lord makes a place for us to live, makes the work we do go well, and since it seems we would be ruined if we did not serve the gospel, He makes us serve the gospel and gives each of us a job.

Treating them as whole persons and raising them

So what I want to say in conclusion is that we must guide the flock, those who are less than ourselves, well along the right way, and help them and care for them. Oppressing is not serving the Lord. Much time has now passed in our church. Our sisters sitting here are not children. I think that those who are young in age, too, must not be treated like children, because they are workers who can think big thoughts like us adults. It means that they are not people who may be handled carelessly. Since they are personal beings, we must treat them as whole persons, teach them what they do not know, wait for them, lead them, teach them what is right, bear with them, when they have grown to a certain extent lead them rightly to the next stage above, and not only speak but show them. That is how we raise them. His saying, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*, means, "Raise My sheep." We must truly treat them as whole persons. We must treat them as people equal to ourselves, as the same workers who have received the same salvation. There is not a single person who may be pressed down by force because he is somewhat young in

age. If we treat them like that, that education is a failure, and it is not serving the Lord, nor feeding the sheep, nor raising them, nor ruling them, nor caring for them, nor leading them rightly. Rather, it is oppressing them. We must truly treat them in an equal relationship, from the same standpoint.

When our workers, whether brothers or sisters, have reached this point, since I have watched their parents from the time they were small, in words I may seem to treat them like children, but in fact, in my heart I treat them as people just like me, as workers of God just like me. Physically they look very young, but spiritually I see them as workers of God just like me and treat them so. And if you have not settled well into a place, we must settle you into one, make you grow, and make you people who can each take on a place in that field. It is the same with all the brothers. I am now preparing and teaching in my heart in order to provide each of you with a place to take responsibility for and handle. I cannot tell you everything that is in my heart, but I am thinking it all through: I should raise that sister this way and entrust her with that area; I should do this with that brother and have him settle down and live here. That is why, though we are not many in number, we are now preaching the gospel to the whole world. Look back once from the place we have passed through until now. Look at how the Lord has made us, how He has filled us so that we can serve the gospel and live well without being constrained by making a living. It is because God gave me such a heart and faith that I did it.

The Lord had a plan for me from the time I first met the Lord, and it was the plan to preach the gospel to the whole world. But I had a different plan. I did not intend to preach sermons, but wanted to play a supporting role for the gospel, like a flower's calyx, just as you do. But the plan of the Lord was different from mine, and later I came to know the plan of the Lord. If so, I

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accepted the role of serving as a flower's calyx in preaching the gospel to the whole world, and have done so together with you until now. What have we done wrong? Are we not living well in this age? I am a person who, when I look at a person, can see where this person would fit. When I meet a person, I can see what kind of vessel he is. The Lord has done everything just as I wanted to do it. You did not come about by dropping out of the sky. It is because God gave me such a heart and faith that I did it. I am not showing off; I am saying that we should all know it together. Now I am saying that we should carry together this burden that God has spoken to me about. I am saying that we should become people who love the Lord together, and that we should follow the will of the Lord. Now it is not I alone; I discern the work and entrust it in turn and share it out. I do not monopolize it alone. What those who went before have already laid the groundwork for is easy, even if there is a little difficulty, because it is not a road that those who come after are walking for the first time. And then we take on new work again. Now that we all know the gospel, we must live a life of faith. We must understand the Lord in the midst of life. You are workers and I am a worker, and you are adults and I am an adult.

I want you to do the work entrusted to you well, become people who truly love the Lord before the Lord, people who can confess from the heart, "I love You, Lord," and do the work of the Lord loyally, and so enjoy the blessing of receiving blessings ourselves and sharing blessings with the people around us as well. We give thanks for the grace of the Lord. I pray that the Lord may bless all our workers so that they settle well into their own places, are nurtured and grow, and become those who truly believe in, follow, and love the Lord from the heart. ✉

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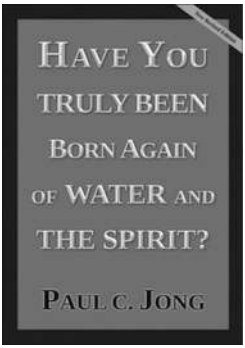
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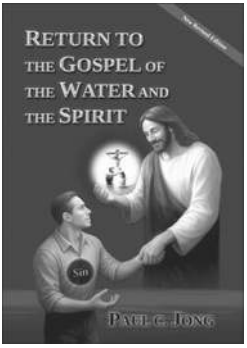
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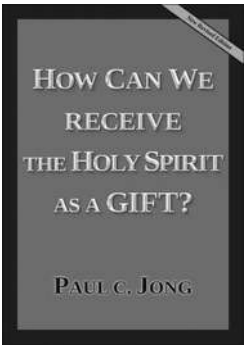
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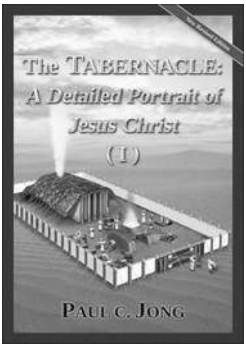
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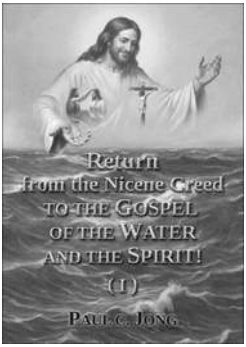
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

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Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

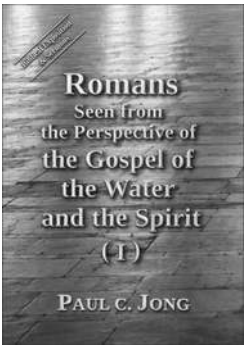
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

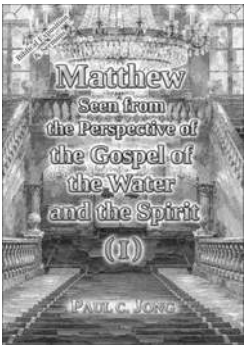
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



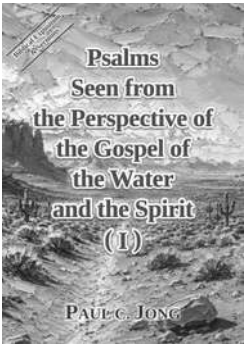
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Psalm seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)

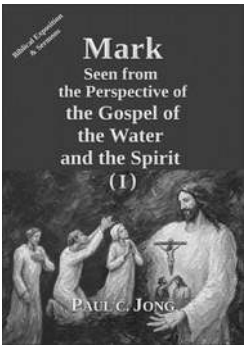


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who is to come.

This book is a biblical exposition that unfolds the Psalms from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. David's songs are not an outpouring of emotion but the confession of a righteous man who has received the remission of sins, a prophetic praise that looked up to the Christ who is to come. The blessing, righteousness, and peace of the Psalms do not come from human goodness but from the salvation God accomplished in Christ.

Beneath it all flows a single gospel. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus took our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the cross, and rose from the dead to make us righteous. When you open the Psalms with this gospel, the old songs come alive as your own confession, and this book leads you to the blessed place of those clothed in the righteousness of God.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

The author, pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached, through the word of the Bible, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit" that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This book does not explain the signs and words of the Gospel of John as mere knowledge of the Bible or records of miracles, but guides readers to the faith by which they are saved from sin and obtain everlasting life by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

May everyone who opens this book meet Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies, and obtain true life.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)

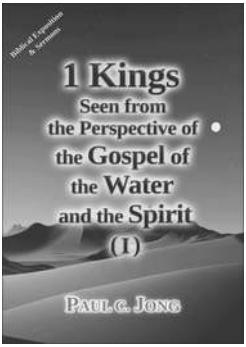


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

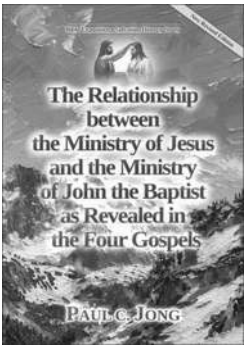


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures forever.

This book reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the Temple and its furnishings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Do not rely on your own wisdom and your own kingdom. Use the wisdom, wealth, and time you have received for the gospel and for souls, and serve Jesus Christ as the King of your heart, building the house of God.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

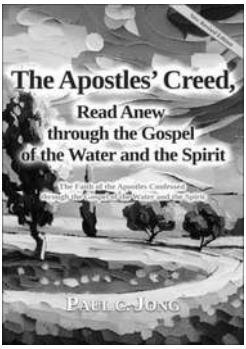
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

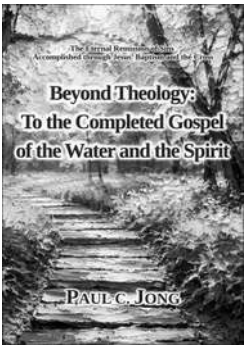


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

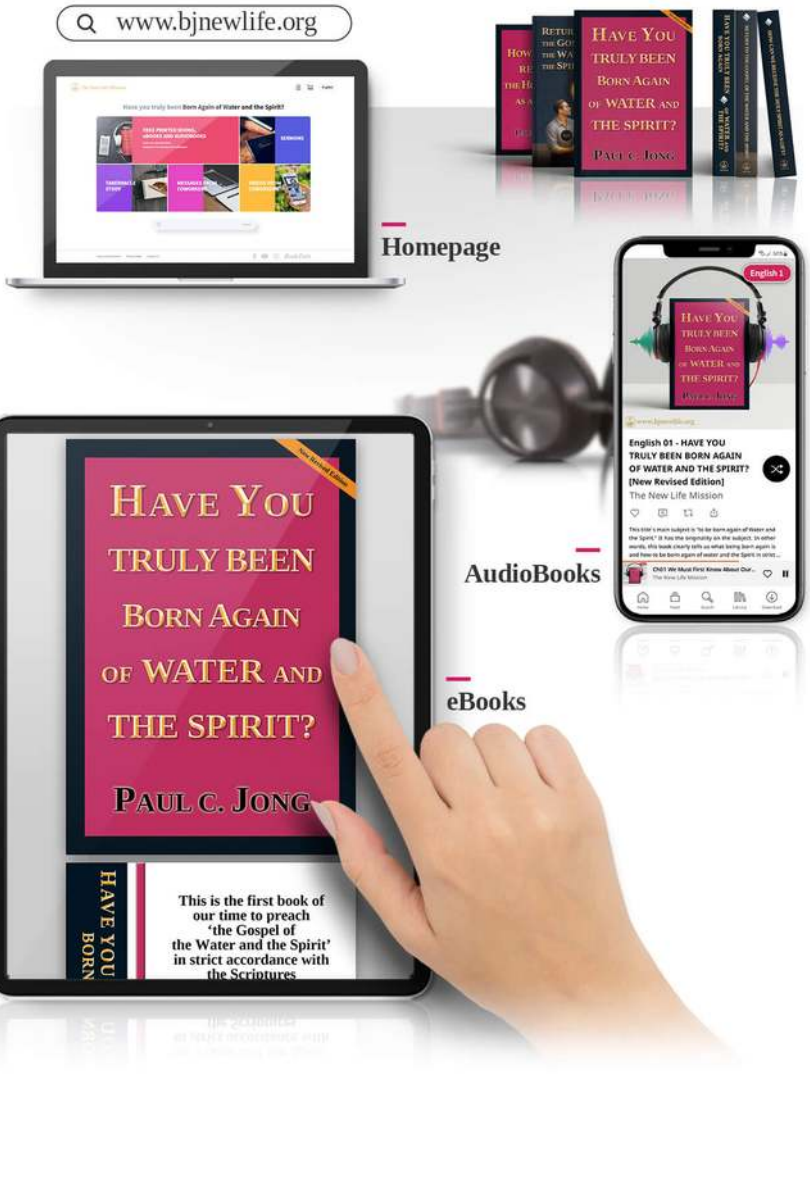
This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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Sincerely,
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Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 110-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

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

The Gospel of John, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

"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).

Nicodemus, who came to Jesus, was the teacher of Israel, but he did not know about being born again. This is because one cannot see the kingdom of God with religious status and knowledge of the Bible. Being born again does not come about through human effort or goodness, but takes place when one believes in one's heart that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, bore all the sins of mankind, received the judgment for them on the Cross, removed all sins, and rose again.

Those who, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have received the remission of sin and obtained new life no longer try to come before God with their own righteousness and religious efforts. They abide in Jesus and are led by the word and the Holy Spirit, and with the love they have received from the Lord, they love one another and testify to the gospel. When they remain attached to Jesus, who is the true vine, they bear the fruit of faith.

The Gospel of John does not let us stop at knowledge, but invites us to the faith of being born again of water and the Spirit. As you follow the word together with Paul C. Jong's *John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)*, may you enjoy this grace of being brought from death into life.

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